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L. L. Stilson

Oct. 25, 1900

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARY,

A

NOVEL.

By *Mrs.* GUNNING,

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BELL, NO. 148, OXFORD-STREET.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARY.

LETTER I.

Countess Dowager Auberry, to the Duchess of Cleveland.

Riversdale, Jan. 2, 17—.

MADAM,

IN obedience to your Grace's commands, Miss Montague leaves my retirement on Tuesday the 9th, to attend you at Richmond. My carriage and servants will conduct her to you; and, I hope, in safety. I have not the honour of being per-

 sonally

ſonally known to your Grace, nor have I any right to complain of the ſeparation to which neceſſity obliges me to ſubmit; yet I muſt lament, that the ſun, which has ſo long illumined my deſcent into the vale of years, ſhould ſet to me, and ſhine only in the hemiſphere of faſhion;—but the Duke ſays it muſt be ſo; and your Grace thinks it high time, Mary being now eighteen, that ſhe ſhould become acquainted with the world. It was not a very good world when I lived in it, but that was twenty years ago, and perhaps it is now better. It was the will of my dear child's deceaſed parents, that this their ſweet and only bloſſom ſhould open in the ſhade of retirement. The charge of foſtering the tender plant devolved on me; how I have acquitted myſelf, her future conduct muſt evince; the legacy bequeathed to me is no longer binding; I could almoſt wiſh I had never known the riches entruſted to my care; when I loſe ſight of them, I ſhall be poor indeed.

And

And muſt I loſe thee, Mary!—Forgive, Madam, a very old woman, who, nearly in her ſecond infancy, feels, with all the weakneſs incident to childhood, how ſevere it is to relinquiſh a darling plaything, in the poſſeſſion of which is compriſed all her earthly felicity;—but my Lord Duke and yourſelf are appointed, by the ſame authority under which I had my early claim, the guardians of her riper years, if you ſhould condeſcend to accept the truſt; you have accepted it—you even demand to be put in poſſeſſion of my treaſure; and I have nothing to add, but that

I have the honour to be
Your Grace's
Very obedient ſervant,
M. AUBERRY.

LETTER II.

The Same, to Lady Jane Petworth.

Riverſdale, Jan. 2, 17—.

I Know nothing of the Ducheſs of Cleveland!—And is it to a woman, of whom I know nothing, that I am condemned to give up a treaſure, on which my ſoul hangs with a degree of dotage which nothing could excuſe, at my time of life, but its own intrinſic value? That Mary, that dear ſon and ſtill dearer daughter's orphan—that Mary is at laſt to be torn from me, and by authority I have no right to reſiſt.

Cruel Montague! ah, you were proud, you were ambitious or unfeeling, when you thought my protection not ſufficient in the noon, as well as in the morning of her days. What will the world do for her that I cannot do? Will your friends, the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland, love her as I love her?

her? Miſtaken man!—thou hadſt enough of the world, yet it is plain its follies and its vices had made no impreſſion on thy callous mind, or thou wouldſt not have robbed me of thy Mary—at a time too when I know not how to exiſt without her. And for whom am I ſtripped of all my comforts? For ſtrangers, aliens to her blood, who, if they do not deſpiſe and ill-treat the dear child, will certainly never love her as I do.

Good God! why ſhould this Ducheſs want to tear her from my arms? Has ſhe too, no feeling for a poor feeble creature, verging on four-ſcore, that ſhe and the Duke ſhould both inſiſt on having her ſent to them before my eyes are cloſed? They ſay it is friendſhip for her father: it is inhuman to me, and nothing that is inhuman can be friendly.

My remonſtrances and intreaties have all, all been fruitleſs; and to-morrow ſe'nnight———My eyes, I think, are dim; I have had a nervous complaint in

them for the laſt ſix days; I muſt lay down my pen.

Continuation.

My dear Lady Jane, the favour I have to aſk from your pity, as well as the friendſhip which ſubſiſted between us before I ſecluded myſelf from that ſociety, which was diveſted of all its charms, by a ſtroke of fate, never to be recollected without horror, is, that you will be at Richmond on the 9th of this month to receive my Mary.

I ſhall tell her how tenderly our hearts have been linked in the bands of friendſhip; and as you hold her in your arms, preſs her to your heart, and beſtow on her the fond careſſes, which I know you will not be able to reſtrain, when my beloved lifts up her tearful but faſcinating eyes to the friend of her parent, then it is

ſhe

ſhe ſhall forget, in your embraces, that ſhe is amongſt ſtrangers; and then ſhall I almoſt forget to hate the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland, for claiming the prerogative my ſon Montague ſo heedleſsly inveſted them with.

I know the Duke's firſt wife was your ſiſter; I therefore cannot but ſuppoſe you are on a good footing with them—God grant I may not be miſtaken, and that your arms may be the firſt that are opened to receive my treaſure. Say you will be there to receive her, and I ſhall be comforted.

Ah! dear Lady Jane, had Mr. Petworth been returned from his embaſſy when I became the victim of my laſt and moſt bitter misfortune, what a tale ſhould I have had to tell you! But reſt my ſorrows for the preſent; in the eyes and in the ſoul of Mary there will be enough of claims to your affection, without unfolding to your ſight the iſſue of her parents' infelicity.

Tell me a little of this ſame Ducheſs;—her ſtyle of writing, methinks, is rather ſtately; but perhaps I am out of humour with her, and unreaſonably too—if I am, pray undeceive me; I ſhould rejoice to hear I had deceived myſelf,—to hear that this woman, ſo terrible to my ideas, is formed to be the condeſcending, gentle, and affectionate protectreſs of my angel Mary. That dear child has done nothing but weep ſince they ſignified their deſire, or rather command, that ſhe ſhould attend them at Richmond. What have I to ſay more? Nothing in the world, but that

I am,

My dear Lady Jane,

Your almoſt heart-broken,

But very affectionate friend,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Lady Jane Petworth, to Lady Auberry.

Petworth Houſe, Jan. 7, 17—.

BEFORE my dear and reſpected Lady Auberry can have broken the ſeal of my letter, I ſhall have embraced her heart's darling, her lovely and beloved grand-daughter.

The moment I received your commands, I diſpatched a meſſage to the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland, with whom, as you have ſuppoſed, I am really on good terms, to inform them I meant to ſpend ſome days at their villa, and ſhould dine with them on the Wedneſday following. I forbore to ſay what was the real motive of my troubling them juſt at this time with my company; I know too much of human nature (though, perhaps, on the long run, that knowledge has not

added very much to my happineſs) ever to ſow the ſeeds of jealouſy where thoſe of kindneſs might otherwiſe ſpring up and flouriſh in abundance. Do you apprehend me, my dear friend? I will ſpeak plainer.

I wiſh your grand-daughter, whilſt ſhe is performing a painful penance, that of abſenting herſelf from your preſence, in conformity to the will of her father—I would wiſh her, I ſay, to ſhew no ill-judged preference, even for the honoured and grateful friend of her revered and only parent. Thoſe who are appointed to be her guardians in the great world may be ſilent from pride, or, if you pleaſe, call it dignity; but aſſure yourſelf they would be hurt by the leaſt infringement of that partiality and fondneſs, which their conſideration for Miſs Montague will, I dare ſay, give them reaſon to expect ſhall be decidedly engroſſed by themſelves.

Our meeting, then, on Thurſday, muſt be, or ſeem to be, a matter of chance; but whilſt I take care not to offend her noble

noble patrons, by what may appear to them too warm advances of cordiality, and which may draw from her unadulterated heart returns that may not be profitable to her intereſt or comfort; whilſt keeping in the back ground, and ſoliciting no more than a common ſhare in her good graces, I ſhall nevertheleſs adopt myſelf the ſteady and fond guardian of her health, her fame, and her repoſe.

When we happen to be alone, I mean to be largely repaid for my anxiety on her account, by receiving, in part, ſuch careſſes as the dear child has hitherto confined to yourſelf; pray, therefore, be convinced our loves, like all other loves, will not be the leſs ardent or durable for having ſome little difficulties to ſtruggle with; nor can it loſe any thing of its natural warmth by the veil of concealment I ſhall contrive to throw over it, merely in conſideration to the faſhionable feelings of the preſent hour.

Dear, and ever dear Lady Auberry, what obligations you have laid me under, by tranſmitting your commands to me, regarding this beloved grand-daughter of your's! you can form no idea of my tranſports, unleſs you recall to your generous mind the thouſand tenderneſſes you laviſhed on me in the early period of my life; and when you think of what I owe to your never-ceaſing goodneſs, then, and then only, can you underſtand with what joy I received, and with what diligence I ſhall execute your commiſſion.

I have alſo a requeſt, my venerable friend, to make on my part—it is, that you will not permit yourſelf to indulge too acutely the regret you muſt unavoidably feel at the deprivation of ſo endearing a companion.

Perhaps the moſt difficult trial that your affections have to experience is already over, and Miſs Montague on her road to Richmond. You will ſoon be familiarized

familiarized to her abſence; and every hour that paſſes, will add to your repoſe, by bringing nearer to your view the moment of her return. I could, and I would, provide you with a ſubſtitute for your lovely Mary during the heavy hours of your ſeparation, if I dare preſume her tender offices about your perſon would be acceptable.

This ſubſtitute I ſpeak of is my niece; ſhe is neither very young nor handſome; but for ſound judgment, decent vivacity, and evenneſs of temper, I have ſeldom ſeen her equal. Her fortune is not ſplendid, but ſufficiently independent; and, when I was left a widow, my huſband added to it a conſiderable legacy. I muſt not take a merit to myſelf which belongs to another, if it can be called a merit, to be the author of a ſuggeſtion that may afford a temporary relief to the beſt of human beings.

Miſs Beaulieu happened to be ſitting with me when I had the honor of opening

your

your Ladyſhip's moſt pathetic letter, the contents of which coſt me ſome tears; I could not refuſe the ſight of it to my niece's intreaties; and it was then that ſhe made the propoſal, which I now only communicate, with my moſt hearty concurrence and wiſhes that it may be acceptable to you.

Say, my dear madam, ſhall I ſend you this treaſure? You have but to command, and ſhe will attend you in rather leſs than a fortnight. She is to be of my party at Richmond; and if ſhe has the good fortune to be approved by Miſs Montague, I think I ſhall ſend her to you, either with or without your permiſſion.

Continuation.

I have this moment got the return of my meſſage to Richmond; it is juſt what I wiſhed and expected. My arrival at the lodge

lodge will precede Miſs Montague's but a few hours, which vacancy I ſhall fill up with laying out a thouſand little plans for the amuſement of my intereſting ward; for in the light of her guardian ſylph I ſhall henceforth conſider myſelf.

I do not, dear Lady Auberry, wiſh to relieve my more than curioſity, at the expence of recalling thoſe ſcenes to your memory, which, even at this diſtance of time, muſt bring with them, in the retroſpection, conflicts and emotions which are at no period of one's life favourable to the human ſtructure; which depends ſo little on its own ſtrength, that the mind works on it at pleaſure; and it is by her alone levelled or ſupported. I will not, therefore, aſk what were the misfortunes of this dear girl's parents—it is enough for me to know that ſhe belongs to you, and is the daughter of that beloved play-fellow who was my friend in the nurſery—I had almoſt ſaid in the cradle.

Continuation.

Continuation.

I have at this inſtant parted with ſome troubleſome morning loungers, viſitors I can hardly call them, they do not mean to be conſidered as my friends—in truth, they have no meaning at all when they do me the honor to break in on my employments, but merely to amuſe themſelves, and kill time with as little fatigue as they can. I wonder how your Mary will like them? It is rather dangerous for a young lady to be held up as a pattern for her ſex; I hope it will not be her fate, but I am ſure ſhe will deſerve it.

Inſtead of a letter, am I not writing you a volume? When I grow tedious, give me a place on your little working table, and take me up again when you grow tired of more important ſtudies; at ſuch a critical moment, trifles have their claim on our indulgence.

You

You aſk me for ſome *traits* of the preſent Ducheſs of Cleveland, and ſhall have the very beſt I am able to give you. My ſiſter died, and the Duke married again during my long, very long, abſence from Britain; but to this hour the Duke, who is a mighty quiet good ſort of a man, calls me ſiſter; and as ſounds, as well as fevers, are often catching, her Grace does me the honour, ſometimes, to addreſs me by the ſame affectionate appellation. And though there is, perhaps, but little ſimilarity in our purſuits, opinions, or diſpoſitions—yet, on the whole, we contrive to agree together as well as connections of the ſame deſcription generally do.

Her perſon may ſtill be called the well-preſerved ruins of a moſt beautiful ſtructure—for, like myſelf, ſhe has paſſed her grand climacteric. She wears no rouge; and though time has ſhaken the roſes from her cheeks, ſhe ſtill retains ſuch a portion of undefinable delicacy and grace, as to eclipſe youth and beauty themſelves, where-

ever

ever ſhe encounters them. A hundred young and lovely women have I admired with pleaſure and a degree of aſtoniſhment, till they have unfortunately placed themſelves too near this extraordinary woman, when a compariſon of courſe followed; and it never failed but that my admiration ſhifted from thoſe who had firſt engaged it, and ſettled on herſelf.

She has a great deal of natural underſtanding; but the refinements of a court, and the adulations that have every where met and crowded, as I may ſay, her path through life, have tinctured her good ſenſe with that kind of deference for her own opinions, as will infallibly make proſelytes of bending minds, and which the few only will reſiſt, who are hardy enough to rate independence at a higher value than the favor of a great lady. With the former ſhe is generally ſurrounded; her table is filled by them, and her aſſemblies compoſed of them; as to the latter deſcription of beings, we muſt look for them beyond

theſe

theſe circles. I fear independence is not a link in the great chain of faſhion.

The Ducheſs of Cleveland has as much wit as any woman ſhould be truſted with—neither is it always of the moſt inoffenſive ſort; it is a dangerous weapon; and the hand that wounds is ſeldom inclined to heal. This ſhining talent is never exerted but for the entertainment of her family and particular friends, with whom ſhe lives in habits of familiarity; to others there is more of dignity,—call it *hauteur*, if you pleaſe,—than deſire to be thought either lively or agreeable, which ſhe can be whenever ſhe pleaſes. The liking or diſliking ſhe takes to people is always at firſt ſight; ſhe is your friend or your enemy for no other reaſon in the world but as ſhe happens to be pleaſed or not pleaſed with the character of your countenance. She poſſeſſes nothing like envy; and beauty is the beſt recommendation to her favor. I mention this *trait* in her humour, that your Ladyſhip may gueſs what ſort of reception

reception your beautiful grand-daughter might expect—indeed you have not told me that she is beautiful—no matter; I have a lively imagination, and well remember what her mother was at eighteen, so I must have it my own way, and am pre-determined she shall be my beauty at least, though all the rest of the world should be of a contrary opinion.

Continuation.

The size of my letter will explain the cause for that abruptness, with which I am so often obliged to drop my pen and my subject. I verily believe it is impossible for any body in this town to sit down unmolested for more than ten minutes, if their acquaintance happens to be without number, and their sentiments without the pale of fashion. I do not know how, it is become

become ſo eaſy, and almoſt ſo general, that inſtead of diſmiſſing our ſervants for a diſregard to truth, the firſt thing we do is to teach them that a breach of it is their duty. I am not arrived yet to that degree of perfection which can ſet me above vulgar prejudices; and think I ſhall retain this, of not inſiſting that my porter ſhall tell lies to every body who happens to call when I am not quite diſpoſed to receive them—at leaſt, I will not begin making the experiment till I have thought of ſome equivalent for the ſervice required.

I have ſaid nearly as much as I can ſay, conſiſtent with my own obſervation, of her Grace the Ducheſs of Cleveland; and as to the Duke, he is, as I have ſaid before, a very quiet, very good ſort of a man; and though of a reſerved temper, which is ſometimes miſtaken for pride, it has none of its diſguſting effects. His ſhyneſs is blended with placidity; and throws no air of reſtraint on the amuſements of his family, or the good humour of his viſitors.

I am

I am told his nephew and heir is juſt returned from the continent; he is ſpoken of much to his advantage. Would not your little Mary, ſome hundred years hence, make a moſt charming Ducheſs of Cleveland? But be that as it may, the taſk of deſcribing him, as well as his two ſiſters, muſt devolve on her, when ſhe has been long enough an inmate of the family to form a deliberate judgment on their ſeveral deſervings.

I have the honor to be, &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Dowager Counteſs Auberry, to Lady Jane Petworth.

Riverſdale, Jan. 9, 17—.

MARY is gone, yet here am I, ſtill loitering, ſtill wiſhing to loiter yet a little and a little longer—I aſk only to have my exiſtence lengthened to her return. I think ſo now; but, ſhould my petition be granted, who can ſay what unreaſonable requeſt may come next? May I not alſo deſire to ſee her married; and, after that, to ſee her the mother of an infant? Perhaps two or three as lovely babes as ſhe was will hardly content me.

Ah! my friend, were we permitted to chuſe for ourſelves, how ill ſhould we cater

cater for our true happineſs! It is better to truſt to Divine diſpenſations than to mark out any regular plan of our own to proceed by. The wonderful age to which I am already arrived is a bleſſing, for which I am thankful—the more ſo, as my downward path has been ſtrewed with the flowers of peace. Would to God the dear hands that ſtrewed them may be at this moment claſped in thoſe of Lady Jane Petworth!—The very idea is a cordial to my ſpirits.

I really think I ſhall be permitted again to embrace my darling; my health is wonderfully good; and I will not allow the ugly fiend *Ennui* to diſpoſſeſs my faculties. I every moment call up the image of my Mary, to fight againſt the melancholy ideas that want to intrude themſelves. I ſee her kneel at the ſide of my bed night and morning, to receive the maternal benediction. I feel her lovely white hands—you never ſaw ſuch hands as my Mary's are—I feel them as they preſs my ſhrivelled ones to her lips,

and

and to her heart. When I paſs into my chapel, her arm ſuſtains me; ſhe kneels at my ſide; and I catch from her ſome of that lively fervour that is ſo beautiful in youth, and ſo acceptable to God.

Am I right, think you, to bring home theſe ſort of recollections? Right or wrong, it is impoſſible I ſhould baniſh them; on the contrary, though we are now, I ſuppoſe, a hundred miles aſunder, I ſee nothing but her animated and artleſs countenance; I hear nothing but the ſoft tones of her voice. This day my woman brought me a noſegay; I am fond of flowers; ſhe would have placed it in my boſom—I thought of Mary—the taſk uſed to be Mary's; I put it aſide, and fear I hurt the good creature, for ſhe went away weeping.

Can any body, my dear friend, try to ſupport their ſpirits better than I do? but if I were inclined to become ſorrowful, I ſhould not be ſingular; there is no dry eye *in* the houſe; and *without* it, I am told, it is almoſt as difficult to find one. My

chaplain is a mighty worthy man—he fears for my health, and he teaſes me with cauſeleſs apprehenſions; he loves Mary—but tells me I think of her too much—that he is ſure I do not ſleep of nights—that inſtead of taking repoſe, I am following her carriage, thinking where ſhe is, how ſhe looks, what ſhe does, and conjuring up a thouſand chimeras to keep myſelf waking; but he is miſtaken—and I tell him ſo. I court ſleep—it is my beſt friend—it ſupplies me with dreams of Mary; and again I live over the ſcenes never to be forgotten. So you ſee, my good friend, that I am quite a heroine, quite a philoſopher.—Writing amuſes me much; and writing of Mary is more than ideal happineſs.

Love, they ſay, makes poets of young men; and why ſhould it not have the ſame effect on an old woman? When I was a girl, I courted the Muſes; they were not uncivil to me then; and, perhaps, in my abſence from Mary, I may try to renew my acquaintance with them.

My

My mind is much diſengaged from ſome gloomy ideas, that, againſt my will, had taken poſſeſſion of me before I began this letter. I will ſeize the white moment of contentment to ſubſcribe myſelf

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt faithful and affectionate ſervant,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER V.

From the ſame, to the Same.

Riverſdale, Jan. 9, 17—

MY ſcrole of yeſterday is gone; I bid this follow it, on the wings of gratitude, to thank you, and to bleſs you for your long and charming letter, which I have this moment received.

You will love my Mary—you will adopt her—you will be her guardian ſylph—you are pre-determined to behold her with partiality. Methinks I have not now a grief in any corner of my heart.

Dear child! thou wilt only go from one parent to another.—What a reflection for my agitated mind to reſt on! Pray write

to

to me the moment you have ſeen her; tell me truly what you think of her; I charge you to look at her eyes; make her unglove too, that you may take notice of her hands and arms. It muſt be by ſtratagem, obſerve, for ſhe hides them as if they were the uglieſt things in nature.

I do not half like your Ducheſs; but no matter—ſhe may do well enough in the public walk of grandeur; and in the private path of inſtruction you will be her conductreſs. I am ſatisfied, perfectly ſatisfied.

I joyfully accept the ſweet companion you offer me; her conſideration for an old woman, like me, ſpeaks volumes in her praiſe. The third part of my heart is her's already; and ſhe may draw on its beſt affection for a child's part.

You will not aſk me what were the miſfortunes of Mary's parents, becauſe you would not diſtreſs me. I have thought of a method to ſatisfy you, and ſpare myſelf;

and you may ſoon expect a tale of ſorrow, but not from my own hand; I ſhall employ another, who will need no aſſiſtance from me. I mean my own woman, who lived with me at the commencement of Mr. Montague's acquaintance with the ſainted mother of my Mary; and who ſtill reſides with me, rather as my companion than my ſervant. Oh, may the fate of that mother be averted from her daughter! I wiſh you to be informed of all the claims my child has to your affection; I therefore cloſe my letter to give Martin ſome papers that may help to illuſtrate her little hiſtory.

It will appear an age before I can poſſibly receive another letter from you, or hear again from my darling; I ſay again, for I have already been enriched with two dear epiſtles in the courſe of her journey.

God bleſs you, deareſt Lady Jane! All the tenderneſs you beſtow on my orphan, I will repay to your amiable

niece. The aſſurances which you give me of tender protection to my love, enables me to ſign myſelf

Your happy friend,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER VI.

Mrs. Martin, to Lady Jane Petworth.

I AM honoured with the commands of my Lady, to tranſmit to your Ladyſhip a circumſtantial detail of the events which happened to herſelf and family after your departure from this country, and during your reſidence abroad; and ſhe has juſt delivered into my hands certain memorandums, written by herſelf, to aſſiſt my recollection, as ſhe ſays; but, with your Ladyſhip's permiſſion, inſtead of reverting to them for information, I ſhall copy them off for your inſpection, as they will better explain the ſituation of my lady's mind at the period they were written, than any weak efforts of my own could poſſibly do.

Several billets are, I obſerve, pinned on to the little manuſcript; theſe ſhall appear in

in their proper places. I ſhall endeavour to avoid engaging any unneceſſary ſhare of your Ladyſhip's attention to that part of a very ſorrowful hiſtory, which it muſt fall upon me to relate; and ſhall therefore compriſe my relation in as ſmall a compaſs as the ſad events, of which it is compoſed, will reaſonably admit.

Any accounts of Lady Mary Pleydell's perſon or diſpoſition would be ſuperfluous in addreſſing myſelf to her friend, who can beſt tell how beautiful was the one, and how amiable the other. It would be equally impertinent to remark to your Ladyſhip on the unbending temper of my Lord, or the ſweet complying one of my excellent Lady; the ſtrange diſſimilarity between them could not eſcape the obſervation of ſtrangers—much leſs that of your Ladyſhip. You know too, Madam, with what dotage their charming daughter was beloved by them both. All theſe matters I leave to your own recollection,

and ſhall proceed with the events that followed your departure from England.

In the ſpring, 17—, my Lord and Lady carried Lady Mary to town, for the firſt time; and on the day of her preſentation at Court I never ſaw Lady Auberry in ſuch ſpirits; as, when ſhe returned home, ſhe ſaid to me, as I was taking off her hoop, Make haſte, Martin, for I am abſolutely fatigued with ſatisfaction. I took the liberty of hoping the buſineſs of the morning had not been too much for Lady Mary? Oh, no, ſhe replied—Mary has acquitted herſelf divinely! The gracious reception ſhe has met with, and the marked approbation of the whole circle, have quite ſickened me with pleaſing emotions!

From the time of her firſt public appearance nothing was ſpoken of, nothing admired but Lady Mary Pleydell; and though ſhe dreſſed with remarkable ſimplicity, her woman was tormented with applications for the patterns of every thing ſhe

ſhe wore. Amongſt the many candidates for her hand, Mr. Montague, then a Colonel in the Guards, was the moſt ſucceſsful. Lady Mary firſt met with him at the Duke of Cleveland's—at which time your Ladyſhip's ſiſter was at the head of that family, and its greateſt ornament, as I have often heard my Lady declare.

It was his Grace who firſt made the propoſal to my Lord for his friend, but not till my young Lady and Mr. Montague perfectly underſtood each other; and great was their ſatisfaction when all her other long train of admirers were diſmiſſed, and himſelf declared the intended ſon-in-law of Lord Auberry. Many feſtivals took place on the occaſion, and teſtified the joy of all parties. The Duke was particularly pleaſed with the union, there being a great friendſhip between his Grace and Mr. Montague, ariſing, perhaps, from the connection of his mother having married the late Duke, which had brought them

early acquainted, and in habits of living together.

Settlements were preparing, equipages beſpoke, and cloaths making, when the rumour of ſome diſcontents in our American colonies clouded the ſerenity of the family's aſpect; my Lord was ſullen—my Lady ſilent—Lady Mary often in tears—and poor Mr. Montague, unable to account for thoſe appearances, ſeemed to enter the houſe in dejection, and to quit it with frenzy.

One day that they had all dined together, and that I had hoped, whatever cauſe might have happened to derange their felicity was done away, about an hour after we had done dinner in the ſteward's room, Lady Mary's woman and myſelf received orders to get every thing ready for their return to Riverſdale early the next morning. I aſked if Mr. Montague was to go with us? The groom of the chambers ſaid he believed not—for that the Colonel

was

was gone off in a great paſſion—that Lady Mary was retired to her chamber, weeping ſadly—and my Lord and Lady all at ſixes and ſevens; that I remember was his expreſſion.

My Lady did not ring for me that night, as uſed to be her cuſtom when ſhe was ready to undreſs, but went to bed without my aſſiſtance, and I ſaw no more of them till Lord Auberry led my Lady to the coach, at ſeven the next morning, followed by Lady Mary, who leaned on the arm of her woman; and never did I ſee ſuch ravages as one night of ſleepleſs agitation had made on the countenances of both the ladies.

When the family were ſeated, my Lord ſternly bade us come into the carriage; and theſe were the only words I heard him utter from the beginning to the end of our journey. Lady Mary ſat between Mrs. Smith and me, and was often ſo fatigued in the four days we were on the road, that her head would inſenſibly fall on my ſhoulder,

ſhoulder, and leave the moiſt traces of her uncomplaining ſorrow on my boſom. Her tears were without agony—but they penetrated through a very thick cloak, with which I had guarded myſelf againſt the cold air of an eaſterly wind.

The penſiveneſs of Lady Auberry ſeemed as unconquerable as my Lord's taciturnity, and was never interrupted, except with a view to withdraw the attention of her daughter from a ſubject that occupied her thoughts too intenſely; ſome looks of intreaty and ſome of reproach ſhe occaſionally directed to my Lord; but they were equally diſregarded.

When we came within a few miles of Riverſdale, Lady Mary was ſeized in a violent ſhiver, and it was with difficulty we could ſupport her till ſhe came to the houſe, where ſhe was immediately put to bed, and an expreſs ſent away for the family phyſician, who, on viſiting his patient, declared, that though ſhe was inclined to fever, the malady he moſt feared

was

was ſeated in her mind; and that the end muſt be fatal if it was not ſpeedily removed.

Here it is, Madam, that I ſhall open Lady Auberry's book of memorandums, extracting from it ſuch parts as relate, at any period, or in any manner, to the connection of Lady Mary and Colonel Montague.

London, May 2.—I have this day ſeen the man, who, of all others, I would chuſe for the huſband of Mary—I have forgot the language of eyes, or he does not regard her with indifference.

May 3.—He has left his name at the door;—how unlucky my Lord and I ſhould have both been out when he called! I think

I think of nothing but him—what a world would this be, if all the men in it had the ſoul, the form, the manners of a Montague! The Duke of Cleveland told me laſt night, that he had more happineſs in the friendſhip of Montague than in all his other poſſeſſions.

May 8.—Mary and Montague are now together every day, and all the day long. Is it in nature that they ſhould not ſee in each other what all the world can diſtinguiſh in them both?—I would give her to Montague in preference to a Prince—and if I have penetration, he would eſteem the gift of her hand more than he would a diadem.

May 14.—My prayers are heard—Mary, my darling Mary, will be the wife of

of Montague—and I experience how poſſible it is to love, perhaps, with more ardour for one's daughter, than one has ever loved for one's ſelf. My grand-children may one day or other tumble over theſe my private memorandums; if they ſhould do ſo, I will here offer them the beſt apology that can be made for an old woman of fifty declaring a *penchant* for a young man of twenty-four.

Then follow theſe verſes, which I believe my Lady made herſelf:

THESE queſtions I aſk of my heart,
Why it beats like a bird in its cage?
And why ſuch ſtrong feelings impart,
Inconſiſtent with wrinkles and age?

Art thou tir'd of comfort and eaſe?
Warm and quiet thy lodging has bean;
Or why, at the cloſe of my days,
Again thy wild frolics begin?

Tell

Tell me, truant, and tell the whole truth,
What makes *me* write verſes on love?
Love only is paſtime for youth;
My thoughts ſhould be ſoaring above.

Unabaſh'd by my petulant tone,
My heart boldly anſwers the charge;
Refin'd, but not tir'd, I'm grown;
And the reaſon I'll tell you at large.

I once play'd my tricks upon you—
That time has gone by long ago;
So I loung'd in your boſom, *perdu*,
'Till I ſaw the bud open and blow.

'Tis the beautiful bud of thy youth,
Gentle Mary, engages my care;
The pupil of Nature and Truth—
So your chidings, I pray you, forbear.

Thoſe feelings of which you complain,
To the treaſure of treaſures belong;
To love him who loves her is no ſin—
Such feelings are virtuous, tho' ſtrong.

I turn over, Madam, many pages of my Lady's diary, as I find they contain little more than a repetition of thoſe particulars which

which I have had the honor of communicating to your Ladyſhip; and ſhall begin again with the

15th of June.

Beautiful and fair are the opening bloſſoms of expectation; we guard, we watch, we hang over them with ſolicitude; the warmth of our imagination is the ſun to which they expand themſelves; but the fruit of happineſs, how ſeldom is it knit on the flower of expectation? Montague is diſmiſſed—what will become of Mary? diſmiſſed by her father! We leave town to-morrow—in what a ſtate of cruel ſuſpenſe do we bid it adieu! My Lord forbids Montague the houſe, but refuſes to give a reaſon for his diſpleaſure. What has Montague done! What will become of Mary!

Riverſdale,

Riverſdale, June 29.

If ſhe dies, I will never, never again ſee the face of her deſtroyer. Ah! my poor Montague! and is it poſſible my hard-hearted Lord can have turned you from his door, when your preſence too might have ſaved the life of his daughter? Martin ſays it is a fact—I will not believe it poſſible.

July 20.

Death, the cloſe and buſy attendant on the unreſiſting Mary, is at laſt diſmiſſed from her pillow—his ſallow mantle is now withdrawn from her face.—Shall I not try to make it once more the garden of health? Shall I not try if the preſence of Montague will not reſtore the deſerter peace to her boſom?

boſom? Oh, Montague! who can reſiſt thy intreaties? not a mother—not the mother of Mary.

To this part of the book is pinned the following letter, from the Colonel to my Lady, and privately delivered to her in the abſence of my Lord:

LETTER.

Has the moſt amiable of mothers—has Lady Auberry exchanged her ſoft and gentle nature for implacability? Are all the riches of her inexhauſtible ſympathy ſhut out from the participation of a wretch who was once the acknowledged object of her favour? If ſhe does not ſcorn, if ſhe does not deteſt Montague—ſhe will hear, ſhe will pity—and, if it be in her power, ſhe will ſave him from diſtraction.

Do you know, Madam, I have been driven from your door? Yes—I have been driven

driven from it like a dog! three weeks ago *your* Lord, the father of *my* Mary, with his own lips, forbade me to approach it! ſince which time I have wandered round theſe unfriendly walls, abandoned to all the horrors of ungovernable deſpair!

She has been ill—ſhe has been dying—ſhe has been at the very gates of death—and I, I who ſhould now have been her adoring huſband, am baniſhed, diſgracefully baniſhed, not only from her preſence, but even from the houſe that contains my ſoul's deareſt treaſure. Am I a culprit, to be treated thus? No, Madam—my honor is unimpeached; and if Lord Auberry has impoſed opinions on you to my diſadvantage, I muſt be permitted to exculpate myſelf from them; you are too good and too juſt to refuſe me a patient hearing.

Recollect, dear Lady Auberry, the change in my Lord's humour ſome days before his cruel and abrupt departure from London—how miſerable it made us—how little we were able to account for it. Your Ladyſhip

Ladyſhip muſt remember alſo, that on the laſt day of my happineſs, and the firſt of my wretchedneſs, this moſt capricious of men invited me to his cloſet—you ſeemed to foreſee his purpoſe, and retired, with Lady Mary, as I followed him to his cabinet. The air of cold and decided indifference that had before ſuperſeded the warmth with which he had eſpouſed my pretenſions, was, on this occaſion, reinforced with a degree of haughtineſs, and I may add hatred, that made me tremble—yet ſaw I not the uplifted hand of fate, till it had effectually cruſhed all my expectations of enviable felicity.

Montague, (ſaid he) as ſettlements are preparing, and the day fixed for your marriage with my daughter, I hope to meet your concurrence to a reſolution I have formed on certain political conſiderations; if you do not accede to my demands, any further negociation is at an end, and my daughter will hereafter diſ-

penſe

penſe with your viſits, as I ſhall with the honor of your acquaintance.

And what are your Lordſhip's demands? I aſked, in a tone of impatience; hard muſt be the conditions to which I refuſe my inſtant compliance.

He ſmiled ironically, remained ſilent for a moment, then, looking me ſternly in the face, bade me underſtand that he was no ſupple-jack, that would bend to the touch. I ſhall never recede, added he; and you may determine, without any offence to me, as your inclinations direct you.

In the name of Heaven, I exclaimed, explain yourſelf, my Lord! what is the meaning of this deliberate torture?

Greater deliberation, Mr. Montague, will become us both, he replied—we have had too much hurry in this buſineſs already—in ſhort, I repent of the promiſe I made you; and but on my own preſent terms ſhall you marry my daughter.

Name

Name them, if you would not drive me to diſtraction.

That is a very lover-like expreſſion, Colonel; but let us try if it has any better meaning than the reſt of Cupid's lying vocabulary. Are you ready to quit the ſervice, in conſideration of my friendſhip; or will you for ever renounce it, by carrying arms againſt your brethren and fellow ſubjects in America, with whom we wage war unjuſtly? The regiment to which you belong, I am well informed, is in the number of thoſe appointed by Adminiſtration, to execute the ſavage maſſacre of their ſavage contemplation; will you quit the army, I ſay? will you ſell your commiſſion? and will you add the money ariſing from the ſale of it to my daughter's ſettlement?

I ſtarted from my chair, for we had both been ſitting, and know not what ſort of emotion it was that oppoſed my utterance; at laſt I ſtammered out, Is it with

Lady Mary's concurrence you make this propoſal, my Lord?

No.

That No, ſaves me from perdition, I cried; and I will to you, Madam, confeſs a ſoldier's weakneſs—I felt ſome tears fall on my burning cheeks.

Of what ſignification is it to you, young man, whether ſhe has or has not been conſulted on this buſineſs?—Am I not her father?

Of what ſignification! oh, my Lord! her ignorance of your laſt propoſal is of ſuch importance to my peace, that I would not exchange the knowledge of it for the fame of a hero, or the lengthened days of a patriarch.

Will you be ſo good, Mr. Montague, for my better information, to turn from the flowery road of eloquence, and condeſcend to tread, with me, the path of common ſenſe—in which language, perhaps, I may be as good a ſcholar as yourſelf? I

expect

expect an anſwer to my plain queſtion—Are you ready to comply with the propoſitions I have made you?

I felt my ſpirit kindle at the acrimony of his countenance and expreſſions—I therefore replied with firmneſs, but with the moſt perfect reſpect,

As the father of Lady Mary Pleydell, my Lord, I honour you; I wiſh to receive from your hand the conſummation of my bliſs, the affianced bride of my affection.

What, my daughter, do you mean?

Pray, my Lord, permit———again I was interrupted.

I will not permit you, Mr. Montague, to name my daughter, but on my own terms; and, without your full compliance, I now formally retract my conſent to her union with you.

You cannot retract, my Lord—you have given it already—I have not deſerved to forfeit your good opinion—and will, in future, endeavour ſtill more to deſerve it—at any, at all, at every price I will purchaſe it, except by the proſtitution of

my principles, and the forfeiture of my honour.

Then you refuſe my daughter?

My God! refuſe Lady Mary!

Yes—I, repeat you refuſe her; *my* ſon-in-law ſhall have leſs ſcruples, and more ſubmiſſion.

I have once been honoured with your full conſent, my Lord—nor will I ever relinquiſh it, unleſs Lady Mary herſelf commands me.

No, Sir! ſhe ſhall not condeſcend to treat with you on the degrading ſubject; though Colonel Montague prefers his paltry pay to an union with her, as the heireſs of my houſe, ſhe may be quite as fortunate in a more deliberate choice.

Is it poſſible your Lordſhip can ſo cruelly miſconſtrue me?—am I leſs worthy of your daughter's affection, becauſe I ſeek to preſerve my duty inviolate, and my honour untarniſhed? Hear me to an end, my Lord (for I ſaw the ſtorm gather on his countenance, and ready to fall on me in a torrent of abuſe)—hear me, I beſeech you.

I have

I have one eſtate which has not been mentioned in the ſettlement, take that alſo —it is more than equivalent to any ſum the ſale of my commiſſion would produce. Could I purchaſe, by ſlavery, the title of Lady Mary's huſband, I would wear my chains with pleaſure; take, then, my Lord, every thing I poſſeſs, but ſpare my honour.

That is your own affair, Colonel Montague—I have nothing to do with far-fetched conſequences—it is not increaſe of fortune for my daughter, or your honour, as you call it, that I am ſolicitous about; I have opinions as well as yourſelf, and an equal right to indulge them. When I made the propoſals, which have ſo highly offended your immaculate notions of honour, I own it was not without hopes they would be rejected; and I thank you for not ſubjecting me to a diſappointment; and, mark me, Sir, added he, with an imprecation of vengeance, from this moment we never meet again, except you are in-

clined to call on me as your implacable enemy, which I ſhall glory in declaring myſelf to be on every future occaſion.

What an interview! what a conference! what a termination to all my hopes! I have ſeen Lord Auberry once ſince that fatal day; but to what purpoſe? to be loaded with freſh inſults and cruel indignities. I almoſt bluſh to recollect that I have tamely borne them, even from the father of my Mary. I am informed he is gone to a diſtant county, and will not return for ſome days—will you admit me to ſee the miſtreſs of my fate—to ſee her only in your preſence, and that of a friend, who, with your permiſſion, I ſhall bring with me?—one who is well known to your Ladyſhip, and reveres your virtues. On your indulgence, deareſt Lady Auberry, depends the fate, I had nearly ſaid the exiſtence, of

HENRY MONTAGUE.

Memorandums

Memorandums continued.

July 3.

The fair face of Mary no longer reſembles a ſnow-drop, bending on its ſtalk—already ſhe ſees the amiable Montague at her feet! dear Montague! with what eagerneſs do I expect thee!—he comes—I ſee him from my windows—and with him—oh! my good God! it is the Biſhop of S————!

Evening.

And do I really ſee my beloved Mary the bride of my almoſt as much beloved Montague? and have I conſented to an union, the conſequence of which may be my own miſery? well, be it ſo, if the happineſs of my children is ſecured—yes, ob-

ſtinate, hard-hearted father, I will endure thy unceaſing indignation, whilſt conſcience acquits me of any crime againſt nature, or againſt myſelf.

July 4.

I have ſlept, I awake again, it is no dream—Mary is, indeed, the wife of Montague.

Noon.

I have embraced my children—they have fallen at my feet, and wetted my boſom with the grateful tears of ſenſibility.

Evening.

Evening.

Contentment has ſhed its vermilion over the cheeks of my Mary; her intelligent eyes ſparkle with delight, as ſhe reads in thoſe of Montague, that his paſſion will never diminiſh. Can I repent my condeſcenſion?

July 5.

How is it I have been ſurpriſed into this ſtrange ſituation? let me reflect a moment—ah! Montague! that friend, that Biſhop of S———,—who could withſtand his reaſoning?—ſo wiſe, ſo juſt, ſo truly chriſtian. What ſaid he? I will conſider over his arguments, and ſtrengthen my mind by reflection.

He ſaid, the ſtrict engagement into which they had entered, ſanctioned by a father's full approbation, was binding and ſacred—that the parties ſo bound were not at liberty to annul the contract, whilſt there exiſted no moral or religious reaſons for retracting. He ſaid, if Lord Auberry had been his brother, and from motives, ſuch as he advanced, had withdrawn, after once giving his conſent to their union, he would have adviſed me to ſanction it, and himſelf would have performed the marriage rites, as an acceptable ſervice to his GOD, in defiance of human caprice and human reſentment. Is not this man, this Biſhop of S———, eminent for wiſdom, meekneſs, and piety?

July 15.

Here are we, as compoſed as if nothing in the world had happened—Montague and

and his friend gone back to town—my Lord returned—Mary every hour improving in health and beauty; ſhe is aſcertained of happineſs in the firſt object of her wiſhes, and has no room in her mind for the reception of imaginary evils; ſhe bears the abſence of Montague wonderfully well indeed.

July 16.

I have again been cautioning Martin and Smith, who are the only ſervants entruſted with our ſecret, to be on their guard. One would think my Lord had a ſympathy of what we had been doing in his abſence; he is inſufferably moroſe, and ſeems to have taken a rooted diſlike to poor Mary; I ſometimes think he does not wiſh her to recover—at leaſt, he teſtifies no pleaſure in the amendment of her health.

July 27.

A note from Montague! what can he mean? It is written in a confuſed ſort of manner; he is in the neighbourhood, and wiſhes to ſee me before I can contrive an interview for him with his wife, and even prior to her knowing that he is in the country—it is very odd this.

[*Colonel Montague's note is pinned on to this part of the Manuſcript; but my Lady has ſo exactly deſcribed the contents, that a repetition of it is unneceſſary.*]

July 27,—*Evening.*

What a terrible ſcene! but it is over—and Mary yet lives. Alas! Montague, how will ſhe ſupport thy abſence? Eighteen

teen months thou wilt be away—what an age they ſeem to me! what a blank will they appear to Mary! the dangers of war too, how do they diſtreſs her? but thou doſt not, my poor child, conſider that in the profoundeſt peace, Death is never idle—that he always ſtands to his cannon—that his fire is inceſſant, and his ſhot unerring.

Auguſt 16.

Montague is ſailed! Mary's heart is burſting with emotions, which, in the preſence of her father, ſhe is forced to ſuppreſs: on my boſom ſhe repoſes them, and we mingle our tears together.

Auguſt 17.

Unfeeling father! how could you, on reading in the papers that the regiment, to which Montague belongs, is embarked for America—how could you ſay, in preſence of your agitated daughter, I am glad the ſcoundrel is gone on his bloody errand, and hope the honeſt Americans will give me a good account of him? Dear, wretched Mary! what muſt have been thy agony! Is not this beloved Montague thy huſband, thy tender, affectionate huſband? and will he not be the father of thy infant? The proſpect is diſtant—but, my GOD, it muſt come! take Thou, take Thou thoſe treaſures of my exiſtence under Thy Holy Protection!

Auguſt

Auguſt 29.

A ſweet ſmile again occupies the face of Mary. What a letter has ſhe received from the Lord of her heart! he wrote it on his voyage—ſhe has read it, I believe, a thouſand times; but can ſhe love ſuch a huſband too fondly? No—it is impoſſible.

September 12.

My Lord talks of taking his daughter to town this winter; he ſays he is determined to marry her in the courſe of twelve months, that ſhe may not be ready to take up with Montague when he comes back. I feel, ſome how, mighty queer when he makes theſe ſort of declarations; but the ſentiment it gives birth to has nothing to

do with regret for the part I have taken, or repentance for its conſequences.

I have not contradicted his plan of removal, or about his daughter's marriage; but ſhall try to avoid the one—the other, thank Heaven, is impoſſible—Death only can divorce my Mary from her Montague.

October 21.

Heaven be praiſed! we have this day got rid of ſome very troubleſome viſitors. If they were merely tedious and diſagreeable, I could forgive them—but I have not the ſame lenity for goſſiping old women and flirting miſſes; one's temper or one's peace is always in danger in ſuch ſociety. I trembled twenty times a-day, when I ſaw the curious glances they directed to my Mary; I thought they had conceived ſome idea of her actual ſituation. Lady Grimſtone did ſay to me, juſt before ſhe had the goodneſs

goodneſs to take herſelf off, If my Lady Mary had been married, Madam, I ſhould have formed certain expectations of happineſs to your good Lord and your Ladyſhip; ſhe looks ſo delicate, and ſo languid, that I fear her conſtitution is very indifferent—I am ſure ſhe is devoured with the bile. I often laugh at my girls, who are remarkably bilious, and tell them that the effects of bile and breeding are ſo much alike, they are hardly to be diſtinguiſhed from each other—vulgar, abominable woman! thank GOD, neither my Lord nor Mary were preſent, when ſhe made the coarſe obſervation; it ſtruck me dumb, but mightily amuſed the young ladies, who laughed exceedingly.

Your Ladyſhip will pleaſe to obſerve, that the days and weeks I paſs over in the manuſcript, from which I am tranſcribing, contain nothing material to your comprehending

hending what happened at Riverſdale, prior to the death of Lady Mary Montague.

The next article I ſhall preſent to your Ladyſhip's notice is dated

January 13, 17—.

A change in Adminiſtration, which has brought in many of my Lord's friends, haſtens him to town; he does not inſiſt on our going with him, but expects that in two months, from this time, we are to follow him. How providential this arrangement—I was driven to deſpair!

My Mary's ſituation is already but too viſible—I wonder her father never obſerved it; nothing but his extreme hatred of Montague, which makes him ſullenly turn away from the object which he knew was once ſo dear to him, can account for the preſervation of our ſecret.

January

January 21.

Lord Auberry is gone; he addreſſed his daughter, juſt before he ſtepped into his carriage, with an air of aſperity, which, even now, ſhe calls to mind with the moſt ſorrowful emotions. Mary, ſaid he, when I command you to attend your mother and join me in London, bring with you inclinations of obedience. At our next meeting I ſhall preſent you, as a wife, to the man of my own choice, more worthy to be your huſband, and my ſon, than your favourite Montague. D——n the ſneaking raſcal! my vengeance ſhall purſue him to the lateſt hour of my exiſtence.

January 22.

Mary begins to recover from the extravagancy of grief ſhe was thrown into by the

the laſt words of her father; I ſpeak to her of comfort—of the happineſs ſhe will experience, as a mother—the joy of Montague's return—and even hint to her, that a time muſt come, when her father's reſentment will ſubſide—and aſſure her, that I will ſeize the firſt favourable moment to explain her ſituation. I endeavour to deceive her, but cannot deceive myſelf; alas! when will that favourable moment arrive?

March 1.

I have put off our London journey, on pretence of indiſpoſition; my Lord is ſatisfied with the excuſe; or, I ſhould have ſaid, he is ſo buſy in ſupporting his party, that he gives himſelf no trouble about us.

March

March 15.

As the time of Mary's confinement approaches, her ſpirits retreat. Dear, dear mamma! ſhe cries, preſſing my hands, it is not the pains of child-bed that terrify me, but——ſhe interrupts herſelf, pauſes, and is ſadly ſilent; I decypher the meaning of that ſilence—it tells me, that the moſt formidable of her feelings ariſe from her fears on my account, when her father ſhall, by chance or otherwiſe, be informed of my indulgence to the wiſhes of two amiable lovers.

April 2.

Every thing is prepared for the reception of the little ſtranger; and Mary is not only compoſed, but in excellent ſpirits —thanks to dear Montague. How welcome

come is his letter at this critical ſeaſon! how eloquent the language of refined and ſteady affection!

April 7.

Mrs. Spellman is arrived, and has been preſented to Mary—ſhe coloured like ſcarlet at ſight of her; but a few days will bring them better acquainted. She is a ſenſible, pleaſing woman, and ſkilful in her profeſſion. All but our two faithful female ſervants ſuppoſe our new gueſt a viſitor of conſequence—and is ſhe not of conſequence? will ſhe not be the guardian of my daughter's ſafety? is it not from her hands that I ſhall receive a little copy of my dear, dear Mary's perfections?

All beyond this laſt article in my Lady's common-place book is a melancholy blank;

blank; and your Ladyſhip muſt condeſcend to accept my well-meant, but feeble, endeavours to ſatisfy your curioſity, in what remains to be told of this diſaſtrous narrative.

Lady Mary Montague was put to bed on the 16th of April; and on the 17th, at thirty-five minutes after two in the morning, my dear Lady, who, I really believe, ſuffered more torture than her daughter, till all was over, received into her arms the moſt beautiful female infant my eyes ever beheld. I will not ſpeak of her Ladyſhip's tranſports, as ſhe gazed on the face of her grand-daughter—it would take up a volume to explain them.

Lady Mary was ſo well on the third day of her confinement, that Mrs. Spellman aſſured my Lady, in a few days ſhe might venture to dine in her dreſſing-room, without running the leaſt riſk in the experiment. My Lady wiſhed her to be ſeen by the family, that they might form no conjectures dangerous to the ſecrecy her Ladyſhip

Ladyſhip was reſolved to preſerve, and conſented to Mrs. Spellman's propoſal, whenever Lady Mary ſhould be able to make the effort with ſafety. On the fourth day her Ladyſhip was ſo well, that my Lady, for the firſt time, ſaid ſhe would dine below; and Mrs. Spellman, who paſſed for a viſitor, attended her down ſtairs, and left only Mrs. Smith to ſit by the bed-ſide till they returned.

Here, Madam, it is difficult for me to proceed; and I would, if poſſible, ſave you from the deſcription of a ſcene, the recollection of which, at this long diſtance of time, is almoſt too much for my weak reaſon to ſupport. I muſt not entirely ſuppreſs the circumſtances; but, for your Ladyſhip's ſake, as well as my own, I ſhall ſhorten them as much as the nature of my painful taſk will admit.

As ſoon as my Lady was gone down to the dining-room, Lady Mary deſired Mrs. Smith to give her a book, which ſhe was reading when taken in the pains of labour;

bour; the poor girl did as ſhe was bid, and afterwards, by her Lady's commands, drew back the curtain at the foot of the bed, to let in the light. Her Ladyſhip having kiſſed the infant that lay ſleeping by her ſide, ſhe inſiſted on her woman's taking a walk in the garden, that ſhe might not hurt her health by ſo cloſe confinement to a ſick room—her commands were ſo poſitive, it was not poſſible to reſiſt them;—ſhe has ſince told me, her heart failed her as ſhe ſhut the door after her, with an intention to find me out, and ſend me to ſupply her place;—not meeting with me in my own room, ſhe went up to the attic ſtory, where I kept ſuch ſtores as were committed to my care;—unfortunately I was in the ſteward's room, or the moſt dreadful calamity of my life might not have happened, and it was ſo long before ſhe found me, that Lady Mary was left alone near a quarter of an hour;—I ſmelt a ſtrong ſmell of fire when I reached the door of her apartment, and thought I heard her

Ladyſhip ſinging as ſhe uſed to do when in health, and her mind at eaſe; alas! it was not the work of imagination, but a too fatal reality!—ſome linen that hung at the fire, I ſuppoſe by the ſnapping of a coal, had caught in a blaze—the fright had affected the dear Lady's ſenſes—nor did ſhe ever recover them to the moment of her diſſolution, which took place before any of the faculty could be brought to her aſſiſtance.

I muſt beg your Ladyſhip's permiſſion to lay down my pen at this place, and alſo to paſs over the agonies of my Lady, for a repetition of which I am totally unfitted.

Mrs. Martin in Continuation.

Good God, Madam! in what a dilemma did I find myſelf. My Lady could give no orders—her faculties were ſuſpended—her life in danger.—My Lord expected—

expected—the infant concealed in the houſe, but unprovided with a nurſe, Lady Mary having intended to take the office on herſelf, as long as her father remained in London, or till he ſhould ſend for the ladies to join him there; nobody but myſelf to inform Colonel Montague of his irreparaple loſs—the ſituation of the family—and the birth of his daughter. My mind was a chaos of confuſion, but I did the beſt I could; I ſent an expreſs to Lord Auberry, with tidings of Lady Mary's death—I ſaid ſhe had died ſuddenly, but durſt not explain any more of her ſituation, and informed him my Lady was not expected to ſurvive her daughter many hours.

The accounts I ſent to Mr. Montague, the packet being at that time going off for New York, were leſs alarming, in point of my dear Lady's danger, but the intelligence of Lady Mary's diſſolution could not be withheld from him—he outlived her juſt long enough to make his will, which bequeathed his whole poſſeſſions

to his infant daughter, and to write a letter to my Lady, the purport of which was to requeſt that Miſs Montague might be chriſtened by the name of her mother; and, if it could be poſſiby avoided, not made acquainted with her parents misfortunes, till time and experience of the world had ſtrengthened her mind to bear the repetition of them with equanimity; that his marriage with Lady Mary, and the birth of her daughter, might remain a ſecret to Lord Auberry, he alſo deſired, as the only method to preſerve my Lady's domeſtic peace, and ſecure the repoſe of his infant—that his fortune was more than ſufficient to render her perfectly independent of her grandfather, whoſe rooted averſion to himſelf would probably devolve on her. To make the ſecret of her birth more ſecure, he propoſed that ſhe might be bred in retirement during my Lord's life, but deſired it might be in the neighbourhood of Riverſdale, where my Lady might occaſionally inſpect the management of the nurſe

nurſe to whoſe care the infant was confided.

This will, and this letter, were incloſed under cover, directed to me, long before my dear Lady's health and compoſure were enough eſtabliſhed for me to deliver them into her hands, and not till after Colonel Montague's name had appeared in a liſt of the ſlain in ſome engagement with the Americans, but I forget where.

Lord Auberry did not come down to Riverſdale ſo ſoon as I ſuppoſed he would have done, nor was his preſence any conſolation to my Lady when he did arrive;—I will take the liberty of repeating his firſt ſalutation, on going to the bed-ſide of the inſenſible, I then thought the expiring mother of Lady Mary Montague,—Madam, ſaid he, you are a great fool to torment yourſelf at this unreaſonable rate;—Mary was *my* daughter as well as your's, yet I would a thouſand times rather ſee her dead, than the wife of your favourite Montague. Thank God, my Lady was inſenſible

to this cruel reflection, or it would have killed her at once.—She does not know it to this hour, for I never repeated it to her.

Your Ladyſhip is doubtleſs trembling all this time for the poor baby, and anxious to know how I managed to keep her from the ſight of my Lord.—I had no Lady to command me what to do, and no guide to conſult with better than my own feeble judgment, Mrs. Spellman being gone to avoid ſuſpicion, and Mrs. Smith in a ſtate of diſtraction, from conſidering herſelf as the fatal cauſe of an accident the moſt fatal—I'll tell you, Madam, how I contrived, and it happened to be right, as it coincided with Mr. Montague's poſthumous directions, and met with my Lady's approbation, as ſhe afterwards aſſured me.

As ſoon as I had conveyed my Lady to bed, ſent for two phyſicians different ways, and diſpatched an expreſs to Lord Auberry, I left the houſe unperceived, with the infant concealed under my cloak—I knew

knew there was a poor woman, the wife of a labourer, who had lain in about three weeks before; ſhe lived not more than four miles from Riverſdale, and to whom I had ſent baby clothes and other neceſſaries by order of my Lady, becauſe they had been repreſented to her as clean induſtrious people, but very poor, and burthened with a large family.—I meant to have walked all the way with my precious charge, but meeting with a return poſt-chaiſe going the ſame road, I got the driver to ſet me down within a hundred yards of the cottage where I meant, at leaſt for the preſent, to depoſit my burthen;—I had taken particular directions as to the ſituation of it, having frequent occaſions of ſending relief to its inhabitants, but had never ſeen either the man or his wife, and my perſon was entirely new to them.

When I entered the cottage, the firſt thing I ſaw was Dame Eſtridge, (for that was the name of the woman) chearfully cutting a ſlice of wholeſome bread from a brown

loaf, and diſtributing it to half a dozen roſy-cheeked children, the eldeſt not more than ſeven years of age, and the youngeſt in a cradle near the fire;—I had not a moment to ſpare in making unneceſſary obſervations or enquiries; the appearance of them altogether ſhewed enough of comfort and cleanlineſs to ſatisfy me;—and, producing the dear child, I requeſted ſhe would immediately ſit down and give it the breaſt—ſhe did as I deſired, and her own little ones all gathered round her, not as if they envied my infant the luſcious repaſt, but rather to look at, admire, and careſs the pretty ſtranger.

I told the good woman, according to a plan I had laid down in my way to her habitation, that I was aunt to the babe ſhe had in her arms; that its mother was dead; and that my brother-in-law, who lived in London, had taken up ſuch an averſion to the child, as had induced me to ſteal it away, leſt he might do it an injury.

The

The Lord in Heaven bleſs me! cried ſhe, dropping the child on her knees, and lifting her hands and eyes with a look of aſtoniſhment,—hate his own babe! and ſuch a baby too! why he does not deſerve to live on the face of God's earth:—I ſuppoſe he is a grand gentleman; a poor man would as ſoon eat his own fleſh as ſee a hair hurted that belonged to their own children; but perhaps this gentlemen do not think Miſs is his own fleſh.——I replied, men were ſometimes very unaccountable, and took ſtrange fancies into their heads;—that I had been told ſhe had lately increaſed her family; and, if ſhe would take the charge of my young kinſwoman, and give her a ſhare of her milk, I would pay her twenty pounds in hand, and give her the ſame yearly, as long as the child continued to improve under her care.—Its name, I ſaid, was Mary Wilſon; that ſhe had been privately baptized; but that one day or other ſhe would have a grand chriſtening, which would be very

profitable to her, if I could get a great lady, whom I had in my eye, to ſtand god-mother; in ſhort, Madam, the honeſt innocent creature joyfully accepted my offered terms. I inſtantly put the money into her hands; and, having got poſſeſſion of the cradle for Miſs Montague, without diſlodging its natural tenant, whom I placed at her feet, I hurried back again as faſt as I could, to attend my dear afflicted Lady, without creating the leaſt ſuſpicion in the family—the confuſion of which continued ſo violent, that nobody thought of aſking me where I had been, or what had detained me ſo long, though I was abſent more than two hours.

There are two circumſtances, I believe, omitted in my detail, that ought to be mentioned; one, that the Biſhop of S———, who married Lady Mary, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Riverſdale at the time of her Ladyſhip's becoming a mother, and had given private baptiſm to her infant;—the other, that when I carried her

to

to Dame Eſtridge, I concealed my face ſo much with my hood, beſides covering one of my eyes with a handkerchief, under pretence of having an inflammation in it, and ſpeaking in a feigned voice, that in all my future viſits, which were very frequent, in the character of my Lady's almoner, the good woman never recollected that it was from my hands ſhe received her nurſling, whom I had the pleaſure always to find improving in health and beauty, with an abſolute dominion over the heart of her nnrſe;—ſhe was never tired of praiſing the dear baby, and ſeldom failed to give me the hiſtory of how ſhe came by it, with a circumſtantial relation of the fabulous ſtory of my dead ſiſter and cruel brother-in-law.

After my Lady's recovery from the jaws of death, and the firſt agonies of deſpair, ſhe dragged on a miſerable exiſtence—which nothing could have made ſupportable, but the ſtolen interviews I contrived for her, under the character of my fellow ſervant, with the only remaining object of

her affections, the many cruelties of my Lord to his angel daughter having totally alienated them from himſelf, to fix them on the ſecreted branch of an illuſtrious but blighted family.

Before Miſs Montague had attained her fourth year, it pleaſed Heaven to remove Lord Auberry from this world, I hope to a better—ſince which time my Lady has ſcarce had this beloved grand-child out of her ſight; and if the ſeparation that has lately taken place does not injure her Ladyſhip's conſtitution, ſhe may live to ſee her third generation of grand-children; her faculties are not decreaſing, and her memory is unimpaired.

The firſt day of Miſs Montague's abſence, Lady Auberry's ſpirits forſook her; and I have not ſeen her ſo melancholy ſince the death of Lady Mary; but your Ladyſhip's very kind and ſeaſonable letter has nearly reſtored them. She is already counting how many months it may be before ſhe can reaſonably expect her to re-

turn—

turn—in the mean time the apartment ſhe ſo lately occupied is getting in readineſs for the reception of your Ladyſhip's niece. Happy, madam, ſhall I be, when Miſs Beaulieu takes poſſeſſion of it!—what an amiable young lady muſt ſhe be!—my Lady is quite penetrated with her goodneſs!

Any thing that I can ſay of Miſs Montague your Ladyſhip would ſurely deem officious, as by this time you will have formed your own judgment of the loſs my Lady muſt have ſuſtained, in being deprived of her company. I hope ſhe has not ſpoiled her eyes with crying. I went with her twenty miles, the firſt day of her journey, and ſhe wept the whole time.—When I ſee that dear face again, may it be dreſſed in ſmiles; and may ſome great gentleman, amiable and handſome as her father, be her lot; but forbid it, good God! that her fate ſhould reſemble that of her mother's.

I believe I forgot to inform your Ladyſhip, that poor Mrs. Smith ſurvived Lady

Mary

Mary but a few weeks; and never came out of her room after the fatal accident, or ever ceaſed reflecting on herſelf, as being the unfortunate occaſion of it.

I have now obeyed the commands of Lady Auberry; and ſhall be proud if they be executed to your Ladyſhip's ſatisfaction—being, with the profoundeſt reſpect,

Your Ladyſhip's highly honoured,
And moſt obedient,
Humble ſervant,
JANNET MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Lady Jane Petworth, to the Counteſs Dowager of Auberry.

Richmond, Jan. 13, 17—.

I Purchaſe a ſhort moment, dear Lady Auberry, at the conſiderable expence of your Mary's ſociety, to tell you ſhe is arrived in health and ſafety; ſhe will, no doubt, give you an account of her reception before ſhe ſleeps—I can, therefore, have nothing to ſay, except to acknowledge that the opinion I had framed of your grand-daughter has not accorded with the laws of preciſion. What a fine idea had I formed, truly! why I expected to have ſeen a finiſhed Venus! and find only an unfiniſhed woman—an abſolute

ſtranger to all the airs and graces, that, in our world of faſhion, are the very criterion of female perfection!

What ſignifies the ſpeaking language of her eyes, if they ſay nothing but what is dictated by an innocent, inexperienced heart? Can you conceive that the lillies and roſes, which are not bought of Warren, will bring her any credit? on the contrary, we hate all partialities of nature, becauſe we have no ſhare in them—and love only thoſe general benefits, which every woman of ſpirit may procure if ſhe pleaſes. What does it matter if her hands are like Parian marble, or the colour of a chimney-ſweeper's, when ſhe does not know how to admire them herſelf, and is perfectly ignorant as to the flouriſh that might be given them in the eyes of others? In ſhort, Lady Auberry, I would tell you, Miſs Montague is a being, ſo ſingular, that, I ſhould ſay, I had never ſeen any body who reſembled her in perſon or manners, if I did not think her a little like

you—

you—very like her mother; and, I muſt confeſs, with all her deficiencies in point of *Ton*, I am, nevertheleſs, inclined to love her, with the ſame ardour that you do.

I have juſt enquired for her—am told ſhe has taken leave of abſence, and is retired, to write to your Ladyſhip by this night's poſt, ſo that you will receive our letters together; and I ſhall not feel myſelf offended if the ſeal of your Mary's ſhould be firſt broken.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Miſs Montague, to Lady Auberry.

Richmond, Jan. 13, 17—

WHEN I wrote to you on my journey, deareſt grand-mamma, though not happy, I was compoſed, becauſe I could think of you and Riverſdale without interruption; but here it is quite another thing—and, if I am not more happy, I am, at leaſt, a great deal more confuſed. Perhaps, after a day or two, I ſhall get over ſome part of my ſhyneſs; and what now diſtreſſes me may then be more tolerable.

I got to Richmond juſt two hours ago; it is now near ſix o'clock, and, I under-

ſtand

ſtand, the family hour is ſeven—ſo I ſhall not ſtay a moment after the dinner-bell has rung; for when I begged permiſſion of her Grace, that ſhe would allow me to let you know I had finiſhed my journey, ſhe hinted her hour of ſitting down to table; and then, not unpolitely or unkindly, added, you will not make me wait, my dear—there is nothing in the world I ſo much admire, in young folks, as punctuality.

I cannot yet tell you how I like the Ducheſs of Cleveland; but will try if I can form any opinion of her Grace by to-morrow; ſhe received me very graciouſly; but her graciouſneſs is not ſo mild—ſo complacent—ſo touching, as the graciouſneſs of a certain perſon, whoſe image is always before my eyes, and will ever be ſo, as long as I am abſent from Riverſdale.

I have not ſeen the Duke yet; but he is to dine at home, and brings home company with him, ſo the Ducheſs told me, and deſired I would make ſome alteration

in

in my dreſs—for ſhe wiſhed I ſhould appear before him to advantage, as he had a more than common regard for my parents. This, undoubtedly, was very good-natured in her Grace; and though I am a little fatigued with my journey, and a great deal embarraſſed, to find myſelf ſurrounded by ſtrangers, I will try to obey her, when I have finiſhed and ſent away my letter.

I have ſeen your amiable friend, Lady Jane Petworth—and it will not take me up till to-morrow to tell you how I like her. I know but one woman in the world whoſe countenance and manners, at firſt ſight, has ſuch a claim to one's affection. She received me, for your ſake, with diſtinguiſhing marks of regard; but, I fear, ſhe afterwards thought me undeſerving of them, for the Ducheſs talked a great deal more to me than ſhe did, though my eyes intreated her to take a part in our converſation.

Her

Her niece, Miſs Beaulieu, went this morning to town with the Duke, and comes back with his Grace to dinner. I wonder if I ſhall like her as well as I do her aunt? I really think I could ſpeak my whole heart to Lady Jane, the very ſame as I could to yourſelf, from whom no thought of your Mary ſhall ever be concealed. Has not your wiſdom guided, your indulgence ſoothed me? Have you not taught me to conquer my childiſh partiality; and reſtored that peace to my boſom, which a perfect indifference for Lord Auberry could only have effected?

I ſhall write to you every day—though, perhaps, I may not ſend my letters quite ſo often. I ſhall keep a ſort of journal, as you deſired me to do; and when I have ſcribbled my paper to the brink, I ſhall ſay to it—Fly, envied meſſenger, to the hands of Lady Auberry, and perſent to her a faithful picture of her Mary's inmoſt thoughts—of her duty and affection for the beſt,

beſt, and the very beſt beloved of parents. Good night, deareſt, dear grand-mamma! tell me if you ever dream of

Your own

MARY MONTAGUE.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the Same, to the Same.

Jan. 14, 17—.

I Went to bed ſo late laſt night, that it was eleven before I opened my eyes this morning. I chid my foſter-ſiſter, that ſhe had not awakened me before; but ſhe ſaid, indeed, I went often to the ſide of your bed, and found you ſleeping ſo ſound, that I am ſure your grand-mamma would never have forgiven me if I had diſturbed you. The natural and true obſervation recalled, oh! what did it recall, of tenderneſs to my grateful mind? The recollection of all your goodneſs to me, ruſhed, at once, into my heart, and from thence found an eaſy paſſage to my eyes. I begged poor Jenny's pardon; and we were as good friends as ever.

I came

I came down to the drawing-room, yeſterday, a few minutes before dinner was announced—but ſtopped ſhort, as I reached the door, panic-ſtruck; nor, to have gained the world, could I proceed a ſtep further. A ſervant had his hand on the lock—I cried out, Sir, Sir, will you be ſo good to acquaint Lady Jane Petworth that I—that is—that ſomebody wiſhes to ſpeak to her Ladyſhip: he did as I deſired; and, in a moment, Lady Jane came to me. Is it you, my dear? ſaid ſhe, kindly taking my hand—I am much flattered, by your ſhewing me ſo charming a proof of your confidence; but why this timidity? the circle you fear to encounter are all diſpoſed to admire you. Thus encouraged, I preſſed her hand, to ſignify my gratitude; and, plucking up as much reſolution as I could, I followed her into the room.

The Ducheſs was ſtill in her apartment; but this I did not perceive at firſt—for it ſeemed to me as if all the world were collected, in her Grace's drawing-room, to

ſtare

ſtare me out of countenance. Lady Jane led me to the Duke, and, afterwards, preſented her nieces to me; and I was not mortified by obſerving marks of diſapprobation in the countenances of either.

The Duke ſaluted my cheek, and told me I had a double claim on his affections; he firſt loved me for my father's ſake—and ſhould now love me for my own. Miſs Beaulieu, who, without being handſome, has a certain ſomething, infinitely charming in her ſmiling, good humoured face, and eaſy elegance of addreſs, ſaid ſhe ſhould put in thus early for a ſhare of my good opinion, from the intereſted motives that I would recommend her to the favour of Lady Auberry. Before I could reply to this obliging compliment, the Ducheſs of Cleveland came out of her dreſſing-room, and the converſation became general. I do not know how to account for it, but I found myſelf much more at my eaſe, before dinner was half over, than I expected to have been in two or three months, at

the ſooneſt; and here I will give you the beſt account I can of the agreeable individuals who formed our delightful ſupper, as well as dinner party.

I begin with the Duke, who is a well-looking man, that I ſhould ſuppoſe to be about forty, if you had not told me his age was fifty-five. He has a proud look, yet I obſerve that no-body ſeems afraid of him; and, though he ſpeaks little himſelf, he liſtens, and ſometimes ſmiles, at the nonſenſe of other people, which convinces me he is not ill-humoured—nor does he ſeem to demand that attention which haughtineſs always exacts, ſo that I cannot prevail on myſelf to think him a proud man—a reſerved one he certainly is.

I thought, by this time, I ſhould have been able to form ſome opinion of the Ducheſs; but, dear grand-mamma, I am as far diſtant as ever; I know no more of her to-day than I did yeſterday—I could have told you then that ſhe is beautiful, though not young—I can now only add, that

that ſhe pleaſes every-body, yet that nobody ſeems to underſtand her diſpoſition—it changes with the ſwiftneſs of time. I have already thought her gay and grave, flighty and ſentimental, tender and ſevere, ſelfiſh and generous, haughty and humble, benevolent and ſatyrical. Sometimes ſhe appears to have a heart formed of the ſofteſt materials, and then gives you reaſon to think it is made of adamant—how, then, can I ſpell ſuch contrarieties, or put them together? What I moſt like her for is, that ſhe treats the Duke with a great deal of affection and reſpect, whilſt the civilities, with which ſhe diſtinguiſhes his relations, are ſtrongly marked.

The Honourable Mr. Lexington, nephew and heir to his Grace, was here yeſterday, accompanied by his two ſiſters, and will be firſt mentioned of all the charming party, becauſe I have already ſaid ſomething of Lady Jane Petworth and Miſs Beaulieu, though not the hundredth part of what I am inclined to ſay.

Mr. Lexington puts me very much in mind of Lord Auberry; he is nearly of the ſame age, ſize and figure, but has a great deal leſs reſerve in his manners, and, I dare ſay, a great deal more ſincerity in his heart. We had a little dance in the evening, and I had the good fortune to be his partner; he ſeems well bred, lively, and good humoured; and I was the better pleaſed with him, becauſe he not only let me talk about you and dear Riverſdale, without ſhewing any ſymptoms of *ennui*, but when politeneſs ſometimes obliged me to drop the ſubject, for fear it ſhould tire him, you cannot think with what eagerneſs he would himſelf renew it.

He ſaid he was in love with you, and would go a thouſand miles to ſee you, if he could but flatter himſelf that he might be one day or other ranked in the number of your friends; and I was ſo delighted with his wiſh to become a candidate for your favour, that I promiſed to be his advocate, if any chance in the world ſhould

ever

ever happen to bring you to London.—Did I think, he aſked, if there was any probability of your coming to town this winter? I ſhook my head, and ſighed from the bottom of my heart, whilſt I pronounced the cruelеſt of all monoſyllables; then, ſaid he, you muſt promiſe to take me in your hand when you return to this dear grand-mamma, and ſay that you have picked up a poor diſtracted lover, who will receive his cure only from her hands. I could not help ſmiling, and telling him I was afraid his caſe was a deſperate one, for I was ſure you would never marry again: yet ſhe may accept my propoſals, ſaid he—and I certainly will try my luck, if I can ever be ſo happy to obtain your permiſſion for my making the experiment. Oh! Sir, I replied, you have it already; but remember, I tell you that you never will be my grand-father.

I was almoſt vexed for having ventured to ſpeak with ſo much freedom, when I ſaw him ready to expire with laughing,

though he endeavoured to hide from me, as much as he could, the effect my odd anſwer had produced on his nerves. I tried to be more grave; but he was ſo comical, till he had brought me into good humour again, that it was impoſſible for me to be long angry, either with myſelf or him.

Miſs Lexington and Miſs Maria Lexington are both very handſome, though in a different ſtile of beauty. The eldeſt is fair, and has a countenance ſomething like the Ducheſs of Cleveland's, very ſweet and languiſhing; and ſhe copies her Grace, I perceive, in her movements and the tones of her voice, which, in the original, are the moſt graceful that can be imagined—and, though not quite ſo ſtriking in Miſs Lexington, they certainly do not miſbecome her.

The youngeſt is a brunette, has a round face, ſparkling black eyes, white teeth, a great deal of colour, and anxiouſly watches the looks of her ſiſter, as if ſhe held her in the higheſt veneration; they

are

are both doatingly fond of their brother, and think no other man ſhould be looked at when he is preſent.—

The Ducheſs has ſent for me, ſo I muſt go to her, but will return to you as ſoon as I can.

Continuation.

My buſineſs in her Grace's apartment was to chuſe my cap and gown for the birth-day; I begged that I might leave the choice of them to her, but I met with a rebuke that ſilenced me—Miſs Montague, ſaid ſhe, I do not like to ſee any thing ſo mighty indifferent as you ſeem to be on the ſubject of dreſs;—I did not altogether approve of your negligence yeſterday; a muſlin gown, large cap, and velvet collar, might have done very well in the morning, but—ſhe was going on, I felt the tears ruſh into my eyes, and I coloured like ſcarlet;

—do not be angry, my dear, continued ſhe, in a milder, and kinder accent, I do not mean to reproach, but to adviſe you. I ſaid I was perfectly ſatisfied of her goodneſs to me, and only felt ſorry that I had unintentionally offended her; adding, that I would in future make it my ſtudy to obey her in every thing.—I dare ſay her Grace meant this gentle chaſtiſement for my advantage, and am grateful for it; only I wiſh that ſhe would look a little more like my dear grand-mamma, when ſhe condeſcends to point out any of the many inadvertencies I muſt of courſe fall into, from my entire ignorance of the world and its cuſtoms;—her Grace was ſo pleaſed with my reply, that ſhe kiſſed my cheek, ſaid I was very compliable, and was ſure Lady Auberry muſt be a moſt excellent woman, from the very proper education ſhe had given me;—away flew my chagrin, away flew all tokens of diſpleaſure, and we employed ourſelves half an hour in the choice of my finery;—I wiſhed to have had a pale

blue

blue ſattin, but was over-ruled; and as many very ſhowy patterns were diſplayed for my chuſing one of them, I fixed on a lilac colour ground, enriched with a ſilver lilly of the valley, with green leaves; and her Grace, who paid many compliments to my taſte, ſaid, that with my permiſſion, ſhe would take it on herſelf to order the trimmings for it, as well as the ornaments for my cap, and all the other little requiſites that would be neceſſary for the grand-daughter of Lord Auberry, on her firſt appearance at St. James's.

I was in hopes, when I went to the Ducheſs's dreſſing-room, to have found Lady Jane or Miſs Beaulieu there; for I don't know why it ſhould happen ſo, but ſome how or other, I do not find myſelf very comfortable when I am alone with her Grace;—I wiſh I could define my feelings to you, for I really cannot underſtand them myſelf.—I do believe I made her Grace angry with me, before ſhe gave me the

check I have juſt repeated; for when I opened the door, and ſaw nobody there but herſelf, I very fooliſhly aſked her what was become of the ladies, whom I had left with her Grace when I went up ſtairs to write; I ſhall never forget how ſhe drew up her neck, and how ſhe looked, though at the time I thought it was only one of thoſe ſhifting attitudes, of which I have already ſeen a great variety; but her anſwer to my queſtion convinced me the alteration that had ſtruck me was leſs the effect of chance than diſpleaſure,—I really know not where they are, ſaid ſhe, nor do I ever trouble myſelf to aſk how my viſitors chuſe to amuſe themſelves;—I look upon you, Miſs Montague, as my ward, not as my viſitor, and I flatter myſelf you will not find my company ſo very diſagreeable, that I ſhould ſuppoſe it neceſſary to call in the aid of any chance people who may happen to be in my houſe, to aſſiſt me in entertaining you.—I felt very fooliſh, and was glad when

ſhe

ſhe referred me to the choice of my dreſs;—and there, you ſee, we had like to have ſplit again.

Lady Jane Petworth often looks at me as you uſed to do, and Miſs Beaulieu's eyes have told me twenty times that ſhe wiſhes to call me her friend, and yet neither of them, by words, encourage me to confeſs that preference for them which my heart has cordially entertained;—I have not yet been a moment alone with them, and perhaps, like me, they are afraid to expreſs every thing they think before the Ducheſs. When we go to town, which is to be the day after to-morrow, I ſhall ſee them often at Lady Jane's own houſe, and am much miſtaken, if, for your ſake, I am not a ſort of favourite there.

I thought I ſhould have gone on with my hiſtory of yeſterday, but the long epiſode of this morning's tranſactions makes it impoſſible—I write the whole time that Jenny is dreſſing my hair;—will you be ſo kind as to ſend my good old

nurſe five guineas, and tell her it is the New Year's Gift of your Mary,—that my foſter-ſiſter is very well, and wiſhes to be at Riverſdale again almoſt as much as I do.—The firſt dinner bell has rung; adieu! deareſt Madam, I will ſend away this to-night, and begin another letter to-morrow.—I am going to put on my white ſattin that is trimmed with the fine point you gave me; I do it to pleaſe the Ducheſs, and to preſerve the peace.——I always find it more difficult to conclude a letter, than to write one, becauſe I know not how to expreſs my duty and affection in any ſort of terms adequate to its own ſtrength, for which reaſon I will have no concluſion at all.

LETTER

LETTER X.

From the Same, to the Same.

Richmond, Jan. 15, 17—.

YESTERDAY we had nearly the ſame dinner party as the day before, with the addition only of two or three young men, who came with Mr. Lexington, and brought with them good humour and better appetites—for, it ſeems, they had been hunting with the King for more than ſix hours. As I took my ſeat at table, the Ducheſs gave me a ſmiling nod of approbation, when ſhe ſaw my muſlin had given place to ſattin, my large cap to a turban handkerchief, and my velvet collar to a ſingle row of pearls.

I ſat

I ſat down next to Lady Jane, who, whilſt ſhe was ſaying ſomething to her Grace, ſlipped her hand below the table—I put one of mine into it—ſhe preſſed it moſt kindly—and, turning round, aſked me, with an air of indifference, where I had hid myſelf the whole morning, that neither ſhe or her niece had ſeen me ſince we parted after breakfaſt?

Mr. Lexington anſwered for me, and ſaid, with a very grave air, Miſs Montague, Madam, has been communicating happineſs to one of the moſt reſpectable women in the world—ſhe has been writing to Lady Auberry. You are perfectly right, ſaid I, as to the nature of my employment; and, perhaps, not altogether wrong as to the conſequences my letter may produce in the heart of a parent, ſo tender and ſo partial: but how, pray, did you get your intelligence?

Sympathy, replied he, is my informer. Am not I in love with Lady Auberry? can any thing be more natural than that I

ſhould

ſhould have my reveries of felicity—that the image of my divinity ſhould purſue me?—It is really the caſe—and I have never once ſeen your dear grand-mother, in my ideal interviews, without beholding you, by the ſame force of imagination.

Did you ever hear of any body ſo odd, and ſo droll as this Mr. Lexington? I hope, when he takes up the honors of his uncle, his preſent eaſe and good humour will not be cruſhed by the weight of his coronet.

We did not dance laſt night, but had muſic before ſupper, and catches after; the gentlemen did not go away till a very late, or rather early hour—and invited themſelves to dine here again to-day, but her Grace would not give them leave; ſhe meant to move her family on Sunday, perhaps might change her mind, and be in town ſooner; they might enquire for her if they pleaſed; and, when they knew ſhe was come, they might ſuppoſe ſhe would be

be glad to open her doors to her friends at all times.

Miſs Lexingtons dined here yeſterday, but did not ſtay long after dinner. What do you think they told me?—and I am ſure I did not miſtake what they ſaid—that they were engaged to go to one concert, three aſſemblies, and a ball, after they got home, and all in one night. Is it poſſible? ſaid I to Lady Jane Petworth, after the ladies were gone—perhaps I miſunderſtood them—I think they could hardly mean all theſe amuſements for one evening. "Such Things Are," my dear, replied ſhe, and folly is certainly the faſhion—yet it is not ſo very catching, but that a young lady, who comes from the pure air of the country, may, with a little caution, eſcape the infection.

Will you not teach me, ſaid I, how to uſe theſe preſervatives? I am too young to be my own phyſician. Moſt certainly, replied ſhe; and to-morrow morning, added

added her Ladyſhip, when the Ducheſs is engaged, as I know ſhe will be, in giving orders to ſome trades-people, whom ſhe has appointed to be here at twelve, I will come to your chamber, and, if you have the goodneſs to admit me, we ſhall there be more at our freedom, to ſay what we pleaſe to each other.

How enviable the felicity! cried Mr. Lexington, who juſt then came up to us, and heard, it ſeems, the laſt ſentence pronounced by Lady Jane—how enviable the felicity, to ſay what we pleaſe!

And who prevents you? ſaid her Ladyſhip, ſmiling—not your uncle, I am ſure; and as to your ſiſters, they have ſpoiled you from your cradle—in ſhort, we are all afraid of you—we tremble at the very ſight of you.

Ah! there it is, replied he—there is my heavy misfortune—love caſteth out fear!

That idea need not diſtreſs you—the fear I ſpeak of has nothing to do with reverence—but is of that ſort, one is apt

to

to feel if a miſchievous child comes too near one—we may love the child, though we keep him at a diſtance—and he might ſpeak, when we were in good humour, if he would not talk nonſenſe, and tell people ſtrange things, that they ought not to credit.

You are a charming creature, ſaid he; and if I dared to ſpeak, it ſhould be only the moſt ſerious truths—and I would force you to believe them. Does Miſs Montague encourage me to declare them?

I do, with all my heart, cried I, laughing. Can we ever be the wiſer or the better for all the good things you could ſay to us, if you are reſolved to keep them to yourſelf?

The Ducheſs ſwam out of her apartment at this moment; at her preſence we all diſperſed, and were ſilent.

I repeat all our little converſations, becauſe you commanded me to do ſo; and becauſe I always think, when I am writing to you, that I am preſent with you, ſitting by

by your ſide, and contemplating your dear benign countenance as I tell you all my perambulations, all the wonders I have heard, and all the ſtrange ſights I have ſeen. At preſent I am barren of ſubjects; and, perhaps, when I get to London, I ſhall complain that I have more than I know how to manage.

Jenny has juſt brought me a ſhort note, which ſhe got from Lady Jane's woman—and here it is:

NOTE.

The Ducheſs has inſiſted on my ſitting down to cheſs—her people of buſineſs were counter-ordered—I find ſhe is very partial to you—and we muſt not give her cauſe to ſuſpect that you have any favourite in this houſe,

houſe, but herſelf. Forgive my vanity; but, if I do not miſread your expreſſive looks, you have already imbibed ſome of thoſe ſentiments of affection for me, with which I was prepared to meet you—and which have been increaſing from the moment I firſt ſaw you. My niece would have had the honour of engaging you for half an hour, but, on ſecond conſideration, I have forbidden her; we ſhall meet in London without reſerve.

My Anſwer, ſent back by Jenny.

No, deareſt Lady Jane, you do not miſread the language of my heart, and, except my grand-mamma, no-body in the world ſhall take precedence of you there, as long as it is really my own kingdom, and I have the government of it. I ſhall obſerve your commands, and obey them.

This

This is all for your ſake, that your Mary is ſo much in favour with this good friend of your's; ſo far from deſerving it, on my own account, I ſhould imagine, from the ſenſe I have of my great inferiority, that ſhe muſt almoſt conſider me below mediocrity. I will give you one ſpecimen of my aukwardneſs, out of the many I could relate, if I had a mind to impeach myſelf. Laſt night, when the Ducheſs beckoned me to her, I was in ſuch a fright at the idea of croſſing a ſpace, that appeared to me as broad as the continent—for I was ſat down as far from her Grace as the room would admit—that, what did I do, but, in paſſing under one of the chandeliers, which none but a fool would have done, I caught my feather on fire; and what might have been the conſequence of my folly, if Mr. Lexington had not flown to my aſſiſtance, and put out the flame with his hands!—though in doing it he ſcorched them conſiderably.

The

The Duke is very good to me, and encourages me to form a better opinion of myſelf than I am inclined to do; he often talks to me of my father, and ſays my mother was one of the handſomeſt, as well as moſt amiable women of her time. Why, dear grand-mamma, are you always ſo ſilent, when I would talk to you about them? When I have but mentioned their names, your face, which before was ſmiling and chearful, has been covered with tears and ſadneſs—yet would you never tell me why you wept, or why you was ſad. You have taught me, grand-mamma, never to repine at the diſpenſations of Providence; you have more enforced the leſſon on my mind by example than precept; and yet there are moments when you certainly regret thoſe beloved children, to whom I owe my exiſtence, more than you would have done, at this diſtance of time, if their fate had not been tinctured with the peculiar colouring of misfortune.

Deareſt,

Deareſt, beſt of parents, I throw myſelf at your feet for pardon, if my inquiſitiveneſs has grieved or offended you—I am almoſt tempted to deſtroy my letter, that I may not run the riſk of doing either; but when I conſider how difficult it will be to write it over again, and how impoſſible to expunge from it what I have written with more melancholy than diſcretion, my mind changes; and I venture to let it go as it is, with this requeſt, that whilſt you forgive my almoſt criminal curioſity, you will not attempt to ſatisfy it at the expence of that peace and that compoſure, which is a thouſand times dearer to me than my own. But, before I ſend this away, I muſt tell you all, and what made me ſo very fooliſh to mention a ſubject which I fear has diſtreſſed you.

Do you remember your grand-father, Miſs Montague? ſaid the Duke to me yeſterday, as we were walking together on the pleaſant terrace before the windows.

No,

No, my Lord, I replied—I believe he was dead before I was born, or died very ſoon after.

You are miſtaken, child—you was four years old at the time of his deceaſe.

I believe I looked ſurpriſed, as this was the firſt time I ever heard my grandfather had lived to ſee me. I remember my nurſe uſed to tell me, when ſhe came to Riverſdale, after you had taken me home, that I muſt love and obey my good grand-mamma, for that all my other parents were gone to Heaven before I was as high as her knee: and once, when I aſked you if grand-papa loved your little Mary? Alas! my child, you ſaid, thou wert never received into the arms of Lord Auberry. All theſe circumſtances ſtruck loud on my memory, and made me change colour; the Duke took my hands, and preſſed them between his own. How I admire the prudence of Lady Auberry! ſaid he; ſhe will not always, my dear, ſuffer you to remain

remain uninformed, as to the hiſtory of the houſe from which you are deſcended. I deſire you will aſk me no queſtions—but wait, with patience, her own time for diſcloſing it.

I wiſh I had obeyed his Grace's commands with exactneſs—I ſhould then have had no occaſion for ſelf-reproach—but, I do not know how it was, the ſubject was uppermoſt in my thoughts, and I laid hold of it without deſign—I may ſay too, without reflection. I will never, never renew it again; and will endeavour to forget that I have done wrong, when you have the goodneſs to aſſure me, under your own ſignature, that you forgive your Mary, and love her as well as ever.

There is a ſtrange noiſe of people running up and down ſtairs—I wonder what it can mean?

I ſent Jenny to enquire, and find all the confuſion that alarmed me is occaſioned by the ſervants having received orders to pack up immediately, for that the Ducheſs

is determined to dine in town this very day, inſtead of going there to-morrow evening. Jenny ſays, that all the women are grumbling at the abruptneſs with which her Grace's orders have been iſſued; I only wiſh we may not be on our return to Richmond before we are got half way to London; however, whilſt Jenny is getting me ready for this ſudden journey, wherever it may chance to end, I ſhall ſtep down and try to find out the cauſe of it.

Three o'Clock.

The carriages are at the door—and in leſs than ten minutes we ſhall be on the road, and, I believe, are pretty ſecure of not turning back again. Her Grace complains how horridly ſtupid it is not to have one man in the houſe except the Duke; and

and only a family circle to make a dull evening ſtill duller, by retailing ſentiments to each other that have been retailed a thouſand times before; and, to avoid the evil, two ſervants are forwarded, to acquaint ſome of her moſt particular friends that ſhe ſhall be in town, and at home, this evening. When we leave Richmond, I ſhall ſee no more of dear Lady Jane till to-morrow; ſhe has aſked, and obtained permiſſion to take me with her to church in the morning—and has bade me be ready ſoon after eleven, when ſhe will call and take me up. I wonder the Ducheſs had not rather choſen that I ſhould have attended her.

The Duke knocks at my door, and bids me make haſte, every thing being ready, and the ladies only waiting for me.—Adieu, deareſt grand-mamma, till to-morrow!

LETTER XI.

From the Same, to the Same.

London, Jan. 15, 17—.

I HAVE no ſleep in my eyes, though it is paſt one o'clock, nor ſhall I get any when I go to bed, for fear by to-morrow I ſhould not be able to remember what has happened this evening.

We reached Groſvenor-ſquare juſt as the day had cloſed in, but the moon and the ſtars almoſt compenſated for the abſence of the ſun; it is the brighteſt night I ever ſaw—but ſo cold, that every thing one touches ſeems to freeze. The Duke and Ducheſs got firſt out of the coach, and

and ran, ſhivering, as faſt as they could into the houſe. I had reached the pavement, and was following them, when a man, muffled up in a great coat, paſſed me very ſwiftly, and ſaid, in quick accents and a tremulous voice, Remember, Miſs Montague, there is a perſon in the world who has claims on you, which he never will renounce.

Something ſtruck me, at the moment, that he had the air and voice of Lord Auberry; when I got to the drawing-room, I was ſo confuſed, that the Duke ſaid, this cold wind, Miſs Montague, becomes your complexion; you carry the roſes of June, in defiance of January's froſt. I think ſhe has too much colour, replied the Ducheſs—it is more like a woman of faſhion, rather to want that vulgar ornament than to be over-burthened with it. Pray, my dear, go to your toilet, and, for Heaven's ſake, lay on as much as you can of cold cream, that, when you come down to dinner, you may look like other

folks. The Duke ſaid, with great kindneſs, I think, Ducheſs, ſhe had better look like herſelf———he added ſomething elſe, but I did not ſtay to hear what it was, ſo glad was I to make my eſcape and follow the ſervant, who attended to ſhew me the apartment allotted to my uſe.

This voice, I think, is ſtill ſounding in my ears—and poſſeſſed me ſo much when I went down to dinner, that, ſomehow or other, I looked round me, as if I expected to have ſeen Lord Auberry ſeated at the table, for I was five minutes too late, and I found a large party in the dining-room. I was vexed, but could not help it—I did not uſe to be long dreſſing—I believe I was too deeply occupied by my recent adventure, which made me forget every thing elſe, that ought to have been remembered.

Ah! my dear grand-mamma, has not Lord Auberry, by his own *intentional* neglect, deſervedly forfeited my eſteem? I will

will think of him no more—and am ſorry I have thought of him ſo much.

The Ducheſs was in great good-humour, and did not even look reproachfully at me for being ſo late. One of the gentlemen, I believe it was Mr. Lexington, ſaid, as I opened the door, Here ſhe is; which made me imagine that I had been the ſubject of converſation, and that the lecture I deſerved was laid aſide or poſtponed, at the interceſſion of ſome benevolent beings, who had become my mediators.

The company I found aſſembled conſiſted of eighteen perſons, our own family included, which gives me a ſtriking proof how very friendly the diſpoſition of this ſort of ſociety is to each other. I have heard ſo much of etiquette, the ceremony uſed in great houſes, and the immenſe time it requires to ſend out cards before you can bring any body to them, that I was quite aſtoniſhed to find ſuch a number collected together at ſo very ſhort a notice. The men, for the greateſt part,

(one or two exceptions I will allow myſelf to make) were very lively and entertaining; ſix or eight of them I had ſeen before, in the two days I paſſed at Richmond. As to the ladies, who were only four, I was an abſolute ſtranger to them; but they are ſuch very particular favourites of her Grace, were ſo much at home in her preſence, and diſtinguiſhed me with ſo much kindneſs, that, after the firſt palpitation of my heart had ſubſided, I recovered my ſpeech, and could even ſpeak a whole ſentence without looking like a fool. It is true, I did ſit by Mr. Lexington, who is ſo droll, yet ſo polite and attentive, that it is impoſſible to be very much frightened when he happens to be your next neighbour; you ſee nothing formidable in the reſt of the circle, becauſe he contrives to engage all your attention to himſelf.

Good night, deareſt grand-mamma! I muſt go to bed, or ſhall not be ready to attend Lady Jane when ſhe calls for me in the morning.

Continuation.

Continuation.

Jan. 16, 17—. *Evening,* 10 *o'Clock.*

Jenny has been crying her eyes out—I aſked her what was the matter—and the poor girl told me, ſobbing, that ſhe believed the Duke and Ducheſs were no chriſtians—nor, indeed, any of the fine ladies and gentlemen who came to viſit them—and ſhe was afraid they might inveigle me to become a papiſt as well as themſelves, for that, notwithſtanding it was Sunday, all the ſervants in the houſe were at cards—and ſhe heard that the ſame wicked works were going on in the drawing-room—for her part, ſhe had come up ſtairs to pray that I might not be drawn into the ſnares, which, it was plain enough, they had laid to entrap me.

She had heard her mother ſay, who had it from a young man who had travelled

from country to country, and from one papiſt town to another, that, in foreign parts, they cared no more for a Sunday than any other day in the week! and that every body they could perſuade to be of their minds, would be one ſtep in their own way to Heaven—and ſo, no doubt, all arts would be tried to make a ladder of me.

I have ſatisfied the agitated mind of my foſter-ſiſter, as well as my youth, ignorance and inexperience would give me leave; I have convinced her, that the papiſts, as ſhe calls them, are chriſtians—that neither the Duke nor Ducheſs are of the catholic perſuaſion—and that I am not in the leaſt danger of becoming one—ſhe bleſſes GOD for it, but wiſhes we had never left Riverſdale, where the Sabbath was always kept as it ought to be.

When I think of you, with how great fervency could I unite my wiſhes to thoſe of Jenny! and perhaps ſome of her ideas, though ſimply expreſſed, are pretty much in uniſon with thoſe I entertain, which I

ſhall

ſhall take care to keep to myſelf—for what right have I to cenſure the opinions of others? it is quite ſufficient for a girl, like me, to preſerve and regulate her own.

The reaſon why I was permitted to go to church with Lady Jane Petworth is, I find, becauſe the Ducheſs never goes herſelf—her health, ſhe ſays, will not allow her to get up early enough for chapel. I have not yet ſeen the domeſtic chaplain, but I ſuppoſe there is one, who officiates in her cloſet.

Do you know, I create ſurpriſe in every body, merely becauſe I am not myſelf ſurpriſed! they expect me to be all aſtoniſhment and wonder at every turn of a ſtreet, and every carriage that paſſes me, and I diſappoint them, by only anſwering, but ſeldom aſking a queſtion!

I think I may ſay that I took leave of Sunday at the chapel door, as I did of dear Lady Jane in Groſvenor-ſquare; I aſked her, at parting, if ſhe and Miſs Beaulieu were not to dine with us? for I had heard

there was to be a great deal of company; and ſhe mortified me, by ſaying, ſhe never choſe Sundays for viſiting her great friends; but, added ſhe, if you are not very lazy to-morrow morning, let me ſee you in Bruton-ſtreet—the Ducheſs gets up late, ſo will not miſs you. I want to ſay a thouſand things to you—and we ſhall have had a comfortable breakfaſt together, before one half the fine people have left their pillows.

Her Ladyſhip offered to carry me to the Park; and I ſhould have been moſt happy to have gone with her, had not the Ducheſs told me the preceding evening, ſhe ſhould be ready to take me there at three o'clock; but I will write no more now, or I ſhall receive a reprimand when I go down.

Continuation.

Continuation.

I return for half an hour; every body was ſo buſily engaged, that I ſlid into the room, and round a dozen card tables, quite unnoticed, till I came to that at which the Ducheſs preſided—half the company were ſitting at the corners of the tables, and, though not playing themſelves, ſeemed as much intereſted as thoſe who were; and I heard one of the lookers-on ſay, I have loſt an hundred pounds by that card—which I cannot account for, or even imagine how it could be poſſible.

I had ſtood a moment behind the Ducheſs's chair before ſhe perceived me; I ſaid ſomething, I do not know what, that made her look towards me. My dear, ſaid ſhe, how have you been diverting yourſelf? are you dead? I ſtared, not underſtanding what ſhe meant; but when ſhe added, have you not been playing at commerce?

commerce? I only replied—No, indeed, Madam, I hardly know one card from another—I have been writing to Lady Auberry—and, if I have your Grace's permiſſion, ſhall return to finiſh my letter. She had juſt taken up a new deal, and ſaid, Pray, child, go where you pleaſe—but do not ſtand any longer by me, for I have not had one good hand ſince you have been at my elbow.

Rejoiced at my unfortunate phyſiognomy, I thanked her Grace, and was moving off with as much haſte as I could, when I found myſelf ſurrounded by all the gentlemen, who were not actually engaged in the parties, and it was with difficulty I eſcaped from their polite, but very preſſing intreaties, that I would not leave them—about which they made a thouſand fine ſpeeches—and thoſe fine ſpeeches, I ſuppoſe, wanted nothing in the world but truth to make them irreſiſtible. You, grand-mamma, will be at no loſs to find out the ſource of my wiſdom in theſe matters;

matters; young as I am, have not experience and Lord Auberry taught me the leſſon of diſcernment, to have done with them all? I muſt add an obſervation or two before I go down to ſupper.

I have been uſed to form a very erroneous idea of people, particularly my own ſex, who paſs their lives in diſſipation. I had ſuppoſed the vortex of pleaſure muſt, in ſome degree, be fatal to all natural affections, and much more ſo to the feelings of friendſhip and philanthropy; on the contrary, the few days I have paſſed in this new world have convinced me how much I am miſtaken—in the firſt inſtance I have ſeen a great deal of even more than family harmony—for I never knew relations fonder of each other than the Lexingtons are—friendſhip thrives abundantly between their Graces and their Graces' viſitors—and as to philanthropy, ſure it is expreſſed in the cordiality with which they accoſt one another, and the warmth of kindneſs they liberally beſtow on myſelf.

I muſt alſo have been miſtaken in my opinion, that the Ducheſs of Cleveland is not at all times equally agreeable—no, ſhe cannot be capricious, becauſe all the ladies, who form her daily circles, declare that ſhe has not a ſingle foible. It is wonderful how much they are all attached to her—and with what aſſiduity they watch her looks, to catch the very firſt indication of her wiſhes! if ſhe looks paler than common, they are diſtracted, for fear ſhe has taken cold; and if ſhe goes into her own chamber, they lament that her Grace does not appear to be ſo well as ſhe was yeſterday. I have ſeen one lady, who actually ſhed a great many tears, when her Grace was not preſent to thank her for them, becauſe ſhe had juſt before complained that one of her toe-nails was grown too near the fleſh, and pained her exceedingly.

Continuation.

Continuation.

Jan. 17, 17—.

Deareſt grand-mamma, I am tranſported with joy, to find that Miſs Beaulieu is determined to be your viſitor after next week. I ſhould ſay a great deal more on the delightful ſubject, if I was not ſure that, to you, my ſenſations will need no explanation; ſhe is the moſt amiable creature in the world—and I intreat you to love her, not quite ſo well, but the next beſt to your Mary.

Since I left Riverſdale, I have not known ſo happy a morning as this has been—how invaluable is ſuch a friend as Lady Jane Petworth! how entertaining her converſation! how inſtructive her council! it appears to me as if I had already caught ſome part of her experience by intuition. I ſhall treaſure up the knowledge ſhe has taught

taught me, as miſers do their gold, and have recourſe to it as often.

Laſt night I was wiſe in my own conceit, and to-day I find out that I know nothing, at leaſt nothing of that ſort of life into which I have ſo lately embarked. Was I not laſt night prating to you of modern ladies and modern manners? I renounce all my newly adopted and erroneous opinions of very fine people's affections, friendſhips and philanthropy—and will, in future, content myſelf with thoſe which I imbibed at your feet.

I ſhall, ſome day or other, communicate to you all that has paſſed at Lady Jane's, and give you the characters of certain ladies, whom I may almoſt call inmates of the Duke's houſe—not as they appeared to be, but as they really are.

I ſhall not write again till the day after to-morrow—to-morrow! what have I not to go through to-morrow! I am frightened to death at the tremendous ceremony! but I keep my fears to myſelf—it is more tolerable

tolerable to bear them, than to be laughed out of them. The Ducheſs has the goodneſs to train me; and the Duke ſays I ſhall do very well.

I am this moment going with her Grace to make ſome purchaſes; I ſuppoſe it will be ſix o'clock before we get back—I ſhall, therefore, ſeal this letter, and leave it to the care of my own man, that I may be ſure of its going. The Ducheſs has ſent for me—all that can be felt of duty and affection I feel for you.

MARY MONTAGUE.

Continuation.

We return ſooner than I expected, and I add this wrapper to my letter, that I may tell you I have ſeen him again—I am ſure it was Lord Auberry—he was riding in the Park, with a very beautiful woman.

I ſhould

I ſhould not have been ſo certain that it was him, if he had not moved his hat to the carriage as we paſſed near him; the time he has been abroad makes no alteration in his figure or countenance; they are both exactly the ſame as when he was laſt at Riverſdale.

Men, they ſay, do not change after they are five-and-twenty, which was his age, you know, at the time I am ſpeaking of. I ſhould have ſaid their perſons do not change, had it ever been ſuggeſted that the ſentiments and inclinations of man were invariable at any period.

I am glad he is no acquaintance of the Ducheſs's; ſhe took the compliment of his bow to herſelf—nor did I undeceive her. Who can that be? ſaid her Grace—I believe all the world know me, but I never give myſelf the trouble of recollecting them. I made no reply—indeed I was ſilent more than a minute; it was not, dear madam, a ſilence of confuſion, but of reflection. Lord Auberry is of no im-

portance

portance to me—I ſaw him with as much unconcern as I ſhould have ſeen any other man, with whom I had the ſlighteſt acquaintance; but the ſtrangeneſs of his addreſs to me on the pavement (for now I am ſure it could be no other than himſelf) recurred to my imagination, and threw me into a reverie, from which nothing could have awakened me ſo effectually as hearing your dear name pronounced by the Ducheſs; and the very odd queſtion that followed it, prevented me from returning to the ſolitude of my own thoughts; but as I cannot make an end of her extraordinary ſubject of converſation in this letter, I will not begin it. I ſhall neither forget the matter or the manner—and will keep them in reſerve till I write again.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Lady Jane Petworth, to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 18, 17—.

I AM enchanted with your grand-daughter; I have this day ſeen her dreſſed for Court; my niece and I had both the honor of aſſiſting at her toilet.—Would you ever forgive me, dear Lady Auberry, if I was not to tell you ſhe looked like an angel?—I do tell you ſo, and I am much miſtaken if ſhe is not told the ſame thing by more than one of the other ſex before we ſee her back again.—I am an old politician, you will therefore excuſe me from giving you any deſcription of her clothes, or how they became

became her; where her diamonds were placed, or how many plumes ſhe wore in her hair; all theſe particulars I ſhall leave for my niece, who ſets out to receive your commands next Tueſday;—this letter will precede her,—and pray admire my management, by leaving her ſomething to tell you, and keeping you a little while in ſuſpenſe; ſhall I not augment the impatience with which you will expect, and the pleaſure with which you will receive her? —forgive this levity,—I know you will be glad to ſee her for my ſake, and, when you know her, you will love her for her own.

Happy Lady Auberry! I cannot drive this charming girl from my thoughts.—I have a thouſand things at this time that ought to engage my attention, but ſhe ſuperſedes them all.

I never knew ſuch a progreſs as ſhe makes in one's affections; we muſt be incapable of a preference, if we refuſe it to her; even the Ducheſs of Cleveland ſpeaks of her with more warmth than is natural

to

to her conſtitution; and as to the Duke, I believe he half adores her;—when I ſpeak of Mr. Lexington, I will not ſtop at half;—he idolizes her in the extreme.—He has made me his confidant, but I have not yet truſted Miſs Montague with his ſecret;—I would willingly have her make the diſcovery of it herſelf; but ſhe is ſo decidedly inconfident of her own powers, that ſhe does not underſtand him, though his looks and his language are ſo very plain, that many a girl of fifteen would read them with facility.—Her's is not the trick of a coquet, a made-up ignorance, which, in reality, has nothing to do with nature or innocence: neither is it want of ſenſibility; the ſpark of ſoul that animates every feature of her intelligent countenance forbids the ſuppoſition; it has its origin in modeſty, and has been nurtured by the unaffected wiſdom and ſanctity of Lady Auberry.

I have yet ſpoken to you only of Mr. Lexington, who, I confeſs, has engaged my

my good opinion, in preference to the many competitors who, I foreſee, are determined to oppoſe his pretenſions; and this partiality, perhaps, is a little ſelfiſh, becauſe he alone has endeavoured to intereſt me in his ſucceſs, whilſt all the others leave me nothing but my own penetration, by which I can fathom their intentions. I will give your Ladyſhip a ſketch of two or three who are, I believe, pre-determined candidates for the honor of being elected the partner of a heart, where bribery will never influence, and where no ſpecies of corruption will ever enter.

Lord Selby is not more than two or three and twenty, his underſtanding moderate, but after all ſorts of faſhionable employments, and faſhionable levities, his purſuits are immoderate; of courſe, thoſe eſtates which came unincumbered to him, on the death of his father, have received no addition to their value by his own good œconomy; though, to do him juſtice, I

dare ſay it has been nearly as good as any other man's œconomy, who has the miſfortune to be left his own maſter at eighteen, with the heavy weight of a coronet, and the ſtill greater burthen of twenty-five thouſand pounds a-year committed to his charge;—a little folly, a little ſpendthrift-like idleneſs, I would readily paſs over, becauſe in the mind of man, as in a well executed picture, we look for ſhade as well as light; and we ſhould be neither a judge of nature's works, or the perfection of the artiſt, if we did not expect to meet with it in the very beſt productions of both.—The vice I diſlike in Lord Selby is the vice of affectation; nature never intended him for the walk he has choſen;—a man who endeavours to gain the admiration of our ſex, ſhould ſet about it with diffidence, ſhould ſeek to engage a heart, rather than demand it as the prize of his own deſervings.—Lord Selby is not incumbered with any thing like ſoftneſs; he has no condeſcenſion but

for

for his own opinions, and if, like the Grand Sultan, he was to throw his handkerchief, he would expect the lady herſelf ſhould ſtoop to take it up. Should he put it in Miſs Montague's power to refuſe his propoſals, (for accept them I am ſure ſhe will not) it gives me pleaſure to think, that though his haughtineſs may be hurt, his repoſe will remain undiſturbed; I repeat, it will give me pleaſure, becauſe, of all the misfortunes of my fellow creatures in which I ſympathiſe, there are few that intereſt me more tenderly, than when ſuch a being as your grand-daughter is the object of a ſtrong and lively paſſion,—that paſſion, ſhould it prove unfortunate, ſuch a diſappointment, if I am not very romantic in my ideas, when it happens to fall on a true ſon of ſenſibility, is never got over ſo effectually, but that it is liable to tincture the colour of his future fate with moments of regret and dejection.—Well, but to have done with Lord Selby in a dozen words more,—

he runs counter to nature in every thing; a lover without humility, a fox-hunter without ſtrength, a gambler without judgment, and a critic without learning.

Sir James Melvern ſcarce ever removes his handſome eyes from the face of Miſs Montague, and his ſighs are ſometimes quite audible;—I heard a young lady tell him the other night, ſhe muſt remove to a greater diſtance from him, or all her powder would be ſhipwrecked in the tempeſt of his emotions.—He is rich, good humoured, and temperate; plays on the fiddle, puts puzzles together, and is perfectly inoffenſive.

Lord Silveſter is one of your fine dancing men, who holds in ſovereign contempt every other ſpecies of exerciſe or amuſement;—he has declared, that if Miſs Montague dances as well as ſhe walks, and preſerves only the degree of colour ſhe has at other times, he ſhall pronounce her a divinity, and never worſhip at any other ſhrine.

None

None of theſe, my dear madam, can ever be your grand-ſon, though I ſhall be much miſtaken if they do not very ſoon, every one of them, lay themſelves at your feet for acceptance; there are many others who ſeem to have caught the infection of *la belle paſſion*, but I cannot enumerate them all.—Mr. Lexington muſt be brought forward in my picture, but ſhall not be crouded into it; and whilſt the others are thrown into the back ground, he is the only figure to whom I would direct your attention; but firſt I muſt go a little into the hiſtory of his family, that, like me, you may hereafter be able to account, and not much to his diſadvantage, for ſome traits in his conduct, which, without this explanation, would often appear indefenſible, as I confeſs they did to me, till I learnt the cauſe from himſelf.

Before the late Duke of Cleveland married your dear unfortunate Montague's mother, he made a ſort of proviſion for his two youngeſt ſons, Lord Henry and

Lord Francis, but ſo inconſiderable as hardly to deſerve that it ſhould be called a proviſion,—not more than five hundred pounds a year to each of them,—and, conſidering the immenſe entail on the Marquis, with the Duke's new engagements, and perhaps a ſecond family, I do not believe he had it in his power to do much more for them.

Lord Henry's ſpirit was not paired to his finances; he deſpiſed living at home, and accepting a place at his father's table, when he could not afford to keep one of his own; he therefore bought a commiſſion in a new raiſed regiment, married for love, and embarked for the Weſt Indies with his pretty portionleſs bride, and all within the ſhort ſpace of a month from the time he became his own manager; thus commencing ſoldier of fortune, he purſued every advantage of his ſituation, till by dint of friends and money he had purchaſed a majority, at the expence of all his little fortune except two thouſand pounds,

pounds, and alſo acquired the character of a dauntleſs hero at the very low price of an arm, when he nobly offered himſelf to head a ſmall army of choſen men, on a ſervice of extreme danger;—he recovered from his wounds, but the hopes he entertained of a reward from his country were daily periſhing under the laurels with which various ſucceſſes had covered him. —As his fame increaſed, ſo did his family, and nothing diminiſhed but the laſt two thouſand pounds he could call his own;—he bore many diſappointments with patience and manly fortitude; but the loſs of a beloved wife, who left him the father of three children, with little to ſupport them, awakened him from his dream of compoſure;—he wrote his father a letter full of complaints, and incloſed another to the miniſter, filled with that ſort of haughtineſs which a man of birth and merit muſt feel, when he finds himſelf forgotten or neglected.

I lay down my pen for the preſent; it is paſt ſix o'clock, and the chairs are in ſight.—I promiſed my darling charge ſhe ſhould find me here at her return from Court;—my niece would have attended Miſs Montague to the morning drawing-room, but the Ducheſs deſired, if ſhe did not mean to go both morning and evening, it might be deferred to the latter, as ſhe ſhould have a long ſtring of her own people crouding on her in every poſſible direction, to compliment Miſs Montague on her preſentation;—this is a way of ſpeaking that would not become every body, but is ſo conformable to the mode and manners of my ſelf-elected ſiſter, that was ſhe to aſſume habits more pleaſing, they would ſtill want the power of charming, from being leſs natural.—Miſs Beaulieu is gone home to dreſs,—ſhe meets us at dinner.—When I have heard all that your dear Mary has to tell me of her adventures, and when they all go back to St.

St. James's in purſuit of more, I ſhall, by my own fire-ſide, dedicate the remainder of the evening to your Ladyſhip.

Continuation.

Your grand-daughter came home from Court looking like a witch, a very Circe,—and I would adviſe you to ſend for her, and to keep her locked up in the ſtrongeſt part of your caſtle; for if ſhe is ſeen much longer at large, I fear her own ſex will try the enchantreſs, and ſhould ſhe weigh a grain more than the book, they will certainly denounce againſt her, without benefit of appeal from their ſentence: —Not in the leaſt fatigued was your Mary —no lady-like complaints—no affected palpitations—no langour of *ennui*—eaſe, harmony, and unſtudied vivacity, unfaded

cheeks, and eyes ſparkling with delight, was all that I ſaw, and all the account I can give you of her.—I think it ſhould ſuffice to juſtify me in my fears for her ſafety, for as ſoon as ſhe becomes the object of one ſex, ſhe will aſſuredly be the deteſtation of the other;—what is there that a woman of *Ton* cannot bear with more philoſophy, than to ſee herſelf eclipſed by a little conntry girl, who has been brought up in the lap of Nature; and will not learn better, though there are a hundred young ladies who would willingly inſtruct her in the ſame accompliſhed arts, by which they have themſelves attained the ſummit of perfection?

The Duke was quite in ſpirits, ſo was the Ducheſs; they ſaid a thouſand things to your Mary, which I ſhould have thought flattery, had they been addreſſed to any body but Miſs Montague;—on my uſual plan of politics, I aſked very few queſtions, and ſeemed to intereſt myſelf with no extraordinary warmth when they told me,

with

with as much exultation as if ſhe had been their daughter, how properly ſhe acquitted herſelf, how graciouſly ſhe had been received, and how generally admired;—my ears opened to catch her praiſes with thirſty impatience,—I could have preſſed her to my heart, and called her the child of my affection, but my emotions not being thoſe of an intoxicated enamorata, I had them ſo much under controul, as to reply, with evident marks of indifference, I was very glad that their Graces were ſo well ſatisfied, and had no doubt but Miſs Montague would always deſerve their protection and very partial approbation;—How can you, ſiſter, replied the Ducheſs, expreſs yourſelf with ſo much coldneſs? why cannot you feel ſome part of my ſenſibility? —What good would it do Lady Jane, if ſhe had as much of it as you have, my dear? ſaid the Duke drily; are your diſpoſitions, your peace, or your conſtitution, benefited by thoſe abundant feelings?—Oh! no, returned ſhe, they are troubleſome enough,

I muſt confeſs, and have half deſtroyed me. —Why then would you perſuade me, ſaid I, to adop an evil with which nature has not encumbered me?—Becauſe, replied ſhe, I think it is one of the moſt graceful features in the minds of people of faſhion, and diſtinguiſhes them from the reſt of the world.—God preſerve us! cried the Duke, laughing, if we had nothing elſe to diſtinguiſh us but our *feelings*, in that caſe, I fear, we ſhould find Nature had dealt with us like a ſtep-dame, and that all her own children are better provided for than ourſelves; what ſay you, Miſs Montague?—She anſwered, ſmiling, Muſt I contradict you, my Lord? experience teaches me, ſince I have had the honor of being under your protection, that benevolent and kind hearts have no partial abode, but may be found in a palace as well as in a cottage.—I ventured unobſerved to look my approbation; my brother-in-law did not confine his to the rules of ſilence; but the Ducheſs deſired we would have done with ſentiment,

for

for of all the beaten roads of dullneſs, that was the dulleſt;—ſhe then touched her repeater, and it ſtruck ſeven; ſhe roſe from table with an air of fatigue, ſaid ſhe muſt have ſome powder put in her hair, and went into her dreſſing-room, deſiring Miſs Montague would do the ſame, who wiſhing me a good night, did as ſhe was bid; but when the door was ſhut, ſhe beckoned my niece, and they went out together; I ſtaid but a few minutes after them, and am now ſitting by my own fire-ſide in all the luxury of ſolitude.—I lay down the pen to refreſh myſelf with a diſh of tea, and a pinch of ſnuff, and as the time of my repaſt will not be lengthened by ceremony or ſcandal, I ſhall very ſoon return to your Ladyſhip and the Lexingtons.

Continuation.

Continuation.

Lord Henry Lexington did not live to receive the anſwers to thoſe angry letters he had ſent to Britain;—from an open, gentle, mild temper, he ſuddenly grew ſuſpicious, choleric, and offenſive:—One day, as he was at dinner with the meſs, the converſation happened to turn on a young man who had juſt quitted the ſervice, becauſe his pay would not ſupport him in it like a gentleman; it was in general agreed that the reaſon was not ſufficient; but an officer who ſat near Lord Henry, and to whom he unfortunately addreſſed himſelf, happened to diſſent from them all, and declared it as his opinion, that a man had better earn his ſhilling a day by hard labour, than live as an officer of rank on any thing below a regiment; unleſs, added he,

he, ſtill applying his diſcourſe to Lord Henry, one's friends come down handſomely, or one happens to have an independence of one's own.—Lord Henry made no reply, but haſtily left the company, and when the officer came back to his lodgings, he found a note from his Lordſhip, demanding ſatisfaction for the inſult offered him in the illiberal reflections he had the impertinence to addreſs to him in the meſs-room, appointing time and place, but leaving the choice of weapons to himſelf.

Unconſcious that he had given his Lordſhip any offence, and far from having intended it, he was thunderſtruck at reading the contents of the billet, and returned to the party he had ſo lately quitted, to conſult with them how a meeting ſo groundleſs might be avoided, without impeachment to the honor of either party; both were exceedingly beloved by the whole ſociety, and every poſſible means was taken to reconcile the difference, but without

out effect;—Lord Henry ſaid, the officer who had given the offence was well informed of his wretched circumſtances, muſt therefore have done it to inſult him, and nothing but the blood of his enemy could waſh away the ſtain his pride and his honor had received.

Before the combatants met, the poor, infatuated, unhappy Henry conſigned his three children, a ſon and two daughters, to the care of a friend, who, if he ſhould happen to fall, promiſed to convey them to England, and place them under the protection of the late Duke, his father;—the conſequence of this meeting was fatal to his Lordſhip, and the friend did as he had engaged to do; he carried them immediately to Britain, and their orphan heads were ſheltered under the roof of their grand-father.

Henry Lexington, for whom I am intereſted, and in whoſe favor I wiſh to intereſt my revered Lady Auberry, was the eldeſt

eldeſt of the poor deſerted babes; deſerted I ſurely might call them, for the late Duke received them into his houſe, fed, and clothed them,—his protection extended no farther; for at his deceaſe he made no proviſion for their future eſtabliſhment, but recommended them to the care of his ſon, by whom he was ſucceeded. Fifteen hundred pounds, the poor remains of their father's ſhattered fortune, was every ſhilling they were entitled to call their own.

It was very ſoon after their grandfather's death that the preſent Duke married my ſiſter. I need not recall to your Ladyſhip's mind what a heart that amiable ſiſter poſſeſſed; nor do I give the whole merit to her, of the Duke's conſideration for his nephew and nieces, though the former is very willing to place the greateſt part of it to her account; and when he ſpoke of her to me, a tear fell on his burning cheeks, fluſhed with recollection, and glowing with the divine animation of tender gratitude.

My

My ſiſter, it ſeems, adopted theſe children, and they experienced from her all the love and all the attention of a real mother. Mr. Lexington was ſent to Eton at an early age, from thence to the univerſity at Oxford, and finiſhed his education by making the grand tour, with more advantage to himſelf than is commonly underſtood to be the caſe with our modern young men of faſhion, whoſe proſpects of honours and affluence in their own country occaſion them to be rather negligent in collecting any very conſiderable ſtore of foreign acquirements.

In proſpective, nobody's views of aggrandiſement could be more ample than his were before he was five-and-twenty. The Duke had been twice married, yet he had ever kept his poſt in the peerage as heir apparent; and now I think there does not remain the remoteſt chance that any little Marquis will ariſe to diſpoſſeſs him of it.

I have

I have ſaid nothing yet of his ſiſters; perhaps it is becauſe I have given all my love to their brother, and have nothing to beſtow on them:—They were bred at a boarding-ſchool, and if I can form any judgment from appearances, the nature and variety of their ſcholaſtic purſuits have rendered them highly accompliſhed, at leaſt in their own opinions. To the Duke they are ſubmiſſive, to the Ducheſs ſomething more than ſubmiſſive;—they are really fond of their brother, appear to admire your grand-daughter, and are civil to me; but ſeem to have loſt every idea of their early protectreſs, or at leaſt to have forgot that ſhe has a ſiſter ſtill living, who, for her ſake, would have been inclined to give them her friendſhip, had they ſhewn any deſire to poſſeſs it.

There are ſpots in the ſun; and in the atmoſphere of faſhion there are many doubtful characters, and ſome that will admit of no doubt at all;—for as long as our married

married women contrive to keep well with their huſbands, that is to ſay, as long as they preſide in their houſes, and do not quit them to live in defiance of order and decency, their private amuſements are overlooked, and the doors even of good people are open to receive them.

When a young Lady is initiated into this ſort of mixed circles, if ſhe has too much candour, or too little penetration for the purpoſes of diſcernment, it is poſſible, in the choice of her friends, ſhe may be miſguided by appearances, and the conſequences may be troubleſome, when too late ſhe finds out the deception of appearances.

Candour is the characteriſtic of Miſs Montague; it is the very eſſence of her nature. At the Duke of Cleveland's ſhe muſt every day meet with women unlike herſelf, and the more dangerous becauſe they are agreeable, entertaining, and ſpecious. The warmth and innocence of her own heart

heart muſt give a falſe colouring to every object; ſhe will ſee the modiſh vices of levity, envy, and artifice, in maſquerade; and though it is impoſſible that purity like hers ſhould be contaminated by example; yet, without a guide, her ſteps may be entangled. Who then ſhall tear off the maſk? Shall I keep the experience of fifty years to myſelf, who am trotting down the hill of life as faſt as I can; and ſhall I communicate no portion of it to the daughter of the firſt and beſt beloved of my friends, who is but juſt beginning to ſet her feet on the ſlippery aſcent—who is committed to my charge, and for whoſe ſafety I hold myſelf reſponſible to Lady Auberry? My ſoul revolted at ſo treacherous a concealment, and, at our next meeting, your dear Mary ſaw all her new acquaintance ſtripped of diguiſe, not as they have appeared, but as they ought to appear, before her.

The converſation I have lately had with Mr. Lexington is ſo long, ſo intereſting, and

and the night ſo far advanced, that I ſhall make it the ſubject of another letter; perhaps it may go by the ſame poſt with this; I am impatient to put the ſubject of it into your hands, and ſhall certainly avoid every poſſible delay.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Miſs Montague to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 19, 17—

DEAREST grand-mamma, I diſpatch half-a-dozen lines to aſſure you, that the tremendous buſineſs of yeſterday being over, I am as well as your own kind heart would prompt you to wiſh me. I have very much to tell you, but not a moment till now have I been able to ſteal for the purpoſe of communication; and what is worſe than all the reſt, I foreſee the ſame difficulty in future. The Ducheſs is determined to have ſo much of me, at home and abroad, that I have not been permitted to be alone

five minutes the whole of this day. From the moment we had breakfaſted, which was not till two in the afternoon, I have been attending her Grace on a tour of viſits, that I might be preſented to thoſe in the circle of her acquaintance, who had not ſeen me before; a taſk even more formidable than that of yeſterday, as, out of twelve houſes, we were let up at ten of them.

I ſhall not ſee my dear monitreſs to-day. Her charming niece came to my bedſide before I was up, to enquire how I did, and brought me a moſt affectionate meſſage from her: they are gone out of town, and do not return till to-morrow. Miſs Beaulieu goes to take leave of ſome of her friends before ſhe ſets out for Riverſdale. Ah! why cannot I be her companion to that deareſt of all dear ſpots? With what joy would I renounce the world and its pleaſures, to throw myſelf into your arms! but my father's commands muſt be obeyed; and when I do not think of my baniſhment from

from you, I obey them without murmuring.

The Ducheſs talks of giving a ball, and of ſending out eight hundred cards of invitation. How will ſhe be able to entertain them all, I wonder? or how divide her attention ſo exactly as not to offend any of them?

Every moment of my time, that her Grace ſuffers me to diſpoſe of, ſhall be dedicated to your amuſement; I will carry you to court, to operas, aſſemblies, concerts, and balls; in ſhort, if your Mary is diſſipated, I ſhall force you to partake of her diſſipation. I hope to have ſeveral ſheets written for your inſpection by the time Miſs Beaulieu is ready to convey them to you, and as often as I go to my own room, whether to dreſs or ſleep, I will firſt tell you the buſineſs of the day. If my journals ſhould be incorrect, as I am ſure they will be, conſider what a variety of whimſical nothings occupy my thoughts, and diſtract my ideas. Make large allowances for a

noviciate in the ſchool of faſhion; and, deareſt grand-mamma, pray that all the errors of your Mary may be thoſe of the head, and never, never, have their ſource in a heart which you yourſelf have moulded, and which is ſo entirely devoted to you.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Lady Jane Petworth to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 19, 17—.

I Cannot prevail on my myſelf to ſend away my letter of yeſterday without a companion to it, or rather a ſomething that better deſerves to be called a poſtſcript, as the firſt was a volume, and the laſt will not extend to more than a ſingle ſheet, if I can even compaſs that, before I ſet out for Windſor, which I ſhall do in leſs than two hours; my chief errand there is to give my niece an opportunity of ſeeing ſome friends, with whom ſhe is in habits of intimacy, and to bring back with me a young

Lady whom I have in my eye, to ſupply Miſs Beaulieu's place at my table, as long as her preſence at Riverſdale can be of uſe or comfort to my ever dear Lady Auberry.

The ſubject of my preſent employment has been already hinted; I ſhall therefore enter on it without any further circumlocution.

I happened to be preſent when Mr. Lexington was firſt preſented to Miſs Montague; it was the ſame day on which ſhe arrived at Richmond. A prophet will certainly reſpect his own prophecies, if all the reſt of the world were to turn a deaf ear to them. I had an early *preſentiment*, and you may remember that in one of my letters I hinted it to you. This ſpark of divination rekindled when I ſaw poor Henry, whoſe eaſe and vivacity had charmed me, ſtand like another Cymon, planet-ſtruck, inſtead of advancing to pay her thoſe compliments, which nobody knows better than himſelf how to embelliſh with all the graces of gallantry, and I ſaid, (without uttering)

—" Yes,

—" Yes, ſweet girl, thou ſhalt be Ducheſs of Cleveland."

I do not mean to tell you all the prettineſſes of a lover's manœuvres, but only to obſerve, that in forty-eight hours I was perfect miſtreſs of his ſecret, without being in his confidence.

Of a ſudden he re-aſſumed his uſual eaſe and chearfulneſs, and I obſerved a ſingularity in his behaviour to Miſs Montague, that did not pleaſe me. If the Duke or Ducheſs were preſent, it was marked by ſtudied coldneſs, almoſt bordering on neglect; but whenever their backs were turned, his advances to her became that moment warm, tender, animated, nor did my being of the party ſeem to incumber him with reſtraint.

The intereſting artleſſneſs and *naivette* of your grand-daughter renders her ſo inacceſſible to vanity, that I am convinced ſhe does not even to this moment ſuſpect him of having entertained the ſmalleſt partiality in her favour.

This unaſſumed ſimplicity has, in its conſequences, diverted me more than once; for when his language has been as declaratory as any thing can be called that is not abſolutely deciſive, ſo far from underſtanding what he means, ſhe actually gives him that kind of anſwers, which, from any other mouth than her own, might not ſound very cruel to the moſt deſpairing of lovers.

Mr. Lexington reads with preciſion the characters of her mind; he ſees that it is a compoſition of the moſt refined modeſty and beautiful unreſerve; from the latter he can draw no good omen to himſelf, becauſe it is a ſort of unreſerve that pervades her manners to all his ſex in general, as well as to her own; and by not herſelf perceiving the chain with which ſhe holds him, it draws him nearer to her, and will be rivetted for ever.

It was the frequent changes in his conduct to Miſs Montague of which I complained to you in my laſt letter; and though he

he has made a tolerable defence, I ſhall not abſolutely acquit him of inconſtancy till his trial is laid before your Ladyſhip, and you ſign the verdict, guilty or not guilty againſt the laws of open and honourable proceedings.

In one of thoſe converſations, in which, I have already ſaid, your dear child would ſometimes take a lively part, without diſtinguiſhing that ſhe was the ſubject of Mr. Lexington's often-interrupted, but ever-paſſionate profeſſions,—his inſinuations became ſo exceedingly pointed, that, conſidering the promiſe I had given you, to be the guardian of her tranquillity, I thought it became the ſacred office of ſo precious a truſt, to find out what were the intentions of my gentleman, if I could do it without appearing impertinent or officious. An opportunity did not offer favourable to my deſign as long as we remained at Richmond; but yeſterday, before I began writing to you, an unexpected one preſented itſelf, which has not only

ſatisfied my doubts, but gratified my wiſhes.

As I am not a ſlave to faſhion, and follow only ſuch of her cuſtoms as are conſonant to my own opinions, ſo I neither go to bed or get up at the hours ſhe has eſtabliſhed. At night I am ſeldom later than twelve; and in the morning I am at breakfaſt rather before than after ten o'clock. I tell you this, not to boaſt of my ſuperior moderation or notability, but to account to your Ladyſhip for the very early viſit I had the honor of receiving from Mr. Lexington. He had heard the Ducheſs of Cleveland rally me on my early riſing; and when I came down to the little room where I always breakfaſt, I ſaw him ſeated by the fire-ſide, with a newſpaper in his hand, which he had taken up from the tea-tray.

I expreſſed the pleaſure I really felt at finding him there, but not unmixed with aſtoniſhment at the hour he had choſen for his viſit—adding, that, after an effort ſo obliging,

obliging, I ſuppoſed, as ſoon as I had rewarded him with a diſh of tea, he would return to his pillow, and ſacrifice again to that repoſe, which his goodneſs to me muſt have interrupted.

Something had diſturbed his ſleep, he ſaid, for the laſt three or four nights—but bade me find out what was this enemy to his reſt, or he never ſhould have the confidence to diſcloſe it. I approved of this opening, but would not underſtand him, till he ſhould think proper to be more explicit. I therefore began to buſy myſelf in preparing his breakfaſt, and my own; I put a hundred queſtions to him—did he like this, that, and the other? he anſwered me with politeneſs, but as if it would be equally agreeable to him, whether I gave him tea or poiſon, ſugar or wormwood.

I kept on chatting on the moſt inſignificant matters, till he had taken his ſecond diſh—I then aſked him, If he was not to be a courtier of the day? Certainly, he replied; and my ſiſters too, as well as

Lord and Lady Francis, and every other branch of the family, are to have the honor of attending in the ſuit of Miſs Montague.

As he pronounced her name, he coloured and heſitated; I ſaw he wiſhed me to ſeize the occaſion—but I let it paſs, and only obſerved, that I did not know Lord and Lady Francis were come to town.

They came late laſt night—I ſaw them only for a moment.

Then, of courſe, Miſs Montague has not yet been preſented to them?

Ah! Lady Jane, how you torture me!

What is there in the obſervation which ſhould convey an idea of torture?

I complain that you will not talk to me on the only ſubject that occupies me—that you will not beſtow your compaſſion on me—that you will not encourage me to ſpeak to you.

I am too dull to find out the ſolution of riddles, and you are inexplicable; let us become friends, then, and change the converſation—

verſation—you have not told me how you like Miſs Montague.

Now you are a thouſand times more cruel than before. Is it poſſible you ſhould not know my opinion of Miſs Montague?

Poſitively—No!

My God! there is no-body will give themſelves the trouble to underſtand me!

Had you put it in my power to underſtand you—had I a clue to conduct me through the many mazes of a man's inclinations, you might not have found me ſo ſtupid—however, I will fairly tell you, the jumble of ideas, one of which is forever diſpoſſeſſing the other, that have ariſen to the view of my reflecting faculties, ſince I firſt ſaw you in the ſame ſociety with the grand-daughter of Lady Auberry,———

He was going to ſpeak, at leaſt I fancied ſo, and begged I might not be interrupted till I had more fully explained myſelf. I then entered into a clear detail of the obſervations I had made, and the concluſions I had drawn from them, finiſhing with

this remark, that any man, who preſumed to engage the attention of an amiable woman by private aſſiduities, which he was either afraid or aſhamed to exhibit in the eyes of his own family, muſt have very little delicacy, or a great ſhare of vanity, to imagine, for a moment, that ſhe would accept thoſe attentions by ſtealth, which it ſhould be his glory openly to avow.

Why, for want of time, am I forced to paſs over the ſcene that followed?—was it lengthened to one half hour, I would deſcribe to you the words, the looks, the attitudes, the pathos of the too intereſting culprit; he pleaded his cauſe—my heart acquitted him, at leaſt of intentional inconſtancy—I pitied, I loved him—and from that moment determined to become his advocate to the venerable parent of his adored Mary; but of this he muſt get no information—many obſtacles are to be got over before he can prudently declare himſelf either to her or you. He has put his conduct under my management—I am to

have

have the entire arrangement of it, as far as it concerns caution and prudence—without which, the difficulties that oppoſe him will increaſe rather than diminiſh. In a few words, this is his preſent ſituation:

The Duke of Cleveland, though he has made his two nieces independent, and gives a ſplendid allowance to his nephew, yet always has declared againſt granting him a permanent eſtabliſhment—moreover, he has aſſured him, in no equivocal phraſes, that if he refuſes to ratify an engagement, which he means to negociate with the friends of a young lady, whoſe connection he is ambitious to obtain, he will withdraw all his bounty from him as long as he lives, and, before he dies, diſmantle the title from every acre that is not abſolutely tied to it.

I find this converſation happened but a few weeks ago. Poor Henry does not know who this intended wife can be—nor did he give himſelf any concern about it, till he ſaw Miſs Montague; he is now

ready,

ready, Andates-like, to reſign all preſent poſſeſſions and future expectations; but, as I am the leaſt diſtracted of the two, perhaps I ſee clearer and further than he can.

I am going to prophecy again—this dreaded wife, and this beloved miſtreſs, I verily believe, are one and the ſame perſon. I have no other reaſon for indulging myſelf with the idea, than the friendſhip which once ſubſiſted between the Duke and Colonel Montague, which is much ſtrengthened by his Grace's very marked approbation of your granddaughter; but till I have a more certain foundation for my hopes, I ſhall not venture to truſt Mr. Lexington with thoſe vague ſurmiſes—for though I can ſafely walk through the valley of ſhadows, a lover may ſtumble over them.

It has ſometimes occurred to me, that I would queſtion a certain young friend of mine, as to the ſtate of her heart before ſhe came hither; it does not appear to have received

received any tender impreſſions—and yet it is almoſt unnatural to ſuppoſe, that every man, who has looked at and liſtened to her, has not, at leaſt, attempted to impreſs it. When I have intended to ſay to her, As a proof of the friendſhip you honor me with, tell me if your affections are diſengaged—an indeſcribable ſomething prevented me—I ſhould call it awe, if the ſweetneſs of her countenance did not forbid the expreſſion; but I may more properly term it the fear of offending againſt terreſtrial diffidence and celeſtial modeſty: No, ſaid I, ſuch a queſtion may diſcompoſe Miſs Montague—I will aſk it of Lady Auberry.

My chaiſe has waited half an hour—it rains exceedingly hard—and my poor old coachman will not thank me for obliging him to get wet before his time. Adieu, moſt reſpectable of women!

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Lord Auberry, to Sir Aſhton Montague.

London, Jan. 19, 17—.

ASHTON,

I Have ſeen her once, twice, thrice—I have ſpoken to her, but ſo diſguiſed, that ſhe did not know the wretch who accoſted her. I had my ſpies at Richmond—I knew all her movements—and was waiting on the pavement when ſhe ſtepped from the carriage, in Groſvenor-ſquare; my arms extended of themſelves to catch the treaſure of my ſoul; the motion was involuntary—I ſtarted at my own preſumption—all my ſins ſtood before me, and obſtructed my

my approaches to the ſhrine of purity; yet, though my arms dropped and my tongue faultered, I dared to tell her I had claims on her affections! ten thouſand curſes on the diabolical contrivances that enſnared me to forfeit them! diſtraction ſeizes me—you muſt take its conſequences, and wait the return of my reaſon.—Come to me, if you can.

AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Miſs Montague, to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 25, 17—.

YOU will receive, deareſt grand-mamma, from the hands of Miſs Beaulieu, whom I have embraced for the laſt time before ſhe ſets off for Riverſdale, a little box, the contents of which, however inſignificant, will be of value to you—as, amongſt many leſſer trifles, it conveys the portrait of your Mary, and ſix ſheets of paper, which ſhe has blotted, at fifty different times, with fooliſh anecdotes—remarks without experience—and philoſophy without wiſdom. I have charged her not to give it to you till

till the morning after her arrival—for I know, if you ſhould get it the ſame night, you will pay me a compliment, which will be fatal to my repoſe, by breaking in upon your own.

Miſs Beaulieu has made an intereſt in my heart, equal to what might have been the claims of Nature, had ſhe given me a ſiſter to partake in the delightful office of attending you—and to partake alſo the ſweetneſs of thoſe careſſes, which has hitherto formed all the happineſs of

Your ever-dutiful
And affectionate
MARY MONTAGUE.

MISS MONTAGUE'S JOURNAL.

January 18,
(Before I prepare for my firſt Launch into the great World.)

I Am going to carry you back to laſt Sunday and the Park, where I have already told you Lord Auberry paſſed us, and that he moved his hat to the carriage. What can be the meaning that all the gentlemen I ſee do no more, or perhaps not ſo much—but content themſelves with nodding their heads at one? Sure, if we are worthy of their taking any trouble about us, I ſhould think it a more reſpectful compliment, were they to take their hats quite off, or, at leaſt, lift them above their heads—but, I am told, it is not the faſhion—and I dare not expreſs my diſlike of what is the faſhion, not even of this, though I cannot approve of any thing that is ungraceful in one ſex, or derogatory to the

the rights of the other. In my opinion, there can be no ſubſtitute for reſpect.

I ſaid I had fallen into a reverie, from which your name, announced by the Ducheſs of Cleveland, ſuddenly recalled me.

I wonder, child, if Lady Auberry expects I am to gain you an eſtabliſhment this winter?

Me, Madam!—what does your Grace mean?

Why theſe good ladies, my dear, who ſit at home by their own fire-ſide, dreaming over the old maps of their gay days, imagine the world is juſt the ſame now as it was a hundred years ago, when a prudent young body, if ſhe was well born, well favoured, rich, managing, and ſtaid at home, was always ſure to get a huſband, as ſtupid as herſelf, before ſhe was out of her leaders.

Why is it that we ſometimes laugh without being pleaſed? I did laugh, but was not delighted.

Well,

Well, Miſs Montague, conſidering how much your education, I mean your knowledge of polite life, muſt have been circumſcribed, you are a very extraordinary girl.

Next to the honor of having gained your Grace's approbation, I ſhall be ambitious to retain it; but if I can ever form any pretenſions to deſerving it, I have Lady Auberry to thank for my good fortune.

Theſe notions are obſolete, and ſtrongly tinctured with the air of your country village—yet there is ſuch a *naivette* in whatever you do and ſay, that, with all your want of knowledge in the *ton*, bids fair to make you as great a favourite with men of the world, as if you had as much of its poliſh as the moſt faſhionable woman, I mean of your own age, that adorns our circles of faſhion. But you have not anſwered my queſtion—Do you really ſuppoſe your grand-mother would think we had done you juſtice, ſhould we ſend you back to her, without having ſettled you, to the

the beſt of her expectations, and to your own advantage?

I only ſmiled, and ſaid I was in no haſte to incumber myſelf with weighty cares, and was ſure you would not think me a weight on your hands, if I ſhould remain ſingle ſix or eight——I was going to ſay years, and perhaps to add ſome other folly to the fooliſh thing I had ſaid before, when Lord Auberry, who had gallopped off from his female companion, again paſſed us; he only looked into the carriage—but took no other notice of us:

That is a very pretty young man, obſerved the Ducheſs, and takes a great deal of pains that we ſhould obſerve him.—Pray is he an acquaintance of your's, Miſs Montague?

I believe, Madam, it is Lord Auberry—he is a very diſtant relation to my late grand-father, and ſucceeded him.

But why not tell me this when he rode by us once before?

Becauſe

Becauſe I have not ſeen him for more than two years—and was not quite certain that it was Lord Auberry.

I ſuppoſe, then, he has been travelling.

I have heard ſo.

Oh, very well—you do not ſeem to know much of him; but, when I ſend out my cards, pray remember me that I ſend one of them to him.

I ſhall ſet this command down on my mind's tablet thus—*Memorandum to be forgotten.*

18th, or rather 19th (being two in the Morning.)

I think this has been the moſt buſy day of my whole life—but to what purpoſe? a retroſpection of the buſtling events with which it has been crowded, affords nothing very well worth recording—yet, perhaps, of equal importance with any that have preceded, or may follow them, in the hiſ-

tory

tory of my new exiſtence. I live at Riverſdale, and I only exiſt in London.

Oh, dear! how fine! I have been abſolutely loaded with finery! I dare ſay there was not leſs in weight than two pounds of bits of tin, ſhaped like flowers, painted of all colours, with leaves of all ſizes, that covered my petticoat! I had never ſeen any thing that reſembled it till then, and bluſhed when the Ducheſs bade me admire it—for you know, grandmamma, my taſte in dreſs—and how ill this ſhew muſt accord with it. I really was quite diſguſted at firſt—but am now inclined to think very meanly of my own judgment in theſe affairs—as every body I met with was laviſh of encomiums on the exquiſite fancy her Grace had diſplayed in the choice of my ornaments. Would not the ſame praiſes have followed, had ſhe clothed me in ſackcloth? I am apt to ſuppoſe ſo.

My chair followed the Ducheſs of Cleveland's; and, as we were going down

St. James's-ſtreet, I again ſaw Lord Auberry—he was walking on the pavement, in an undreſs, which I was glad to ſee, as it indicated that I ſhould not have the mortification of meeting him in the drawing-room—that would have been a very aukward circumſtance—for I do not ſuppoſe I ſhould have had the honor of being acknowledged by him as an acquaintance, which might have made the Ducheſs more inquiſitive than I wiſh her to be; and, on the other hand, had he inſulted me with his attentions, I ſhould have been equally diſtreſſed—for never will I, a ſecond time, be the victim of his duplicity. I ſhall not ſtudy to avoid him—and, as certainly, I ſhall not rejoice to meet him.

When we reached one of the outer rooms, we found many, indeed, I believe, the whole of the Duke's family, waiting there to receive us; and I was tranſported to find every one of the ladies, particularly Miſs Lexington and her ſiſter, if poſſible, more covered with this deteſtable painted

tin

tin than I was. I was preſented to Lord and Lady Francis Lexington, and to a Lady Elizabeth Jones; fortunately for me, I was already known to the reſt of the party, or what would have become of me! Mr. Lexington thought I was going to faint, and caught hold of my hand—but I laughed at his odd idea, and aſſured him I was very well, only a little frightened—I might have ſaid a great deal; but, novice as I am, I ſee it is beſt to conceal as much of one's weakneſs as one can.

My heart did not lie ſtill, or my ſight return to its uſual clearneſs of perception, till I had gone through the whole ceremony; but the obliging enquiries their Majeſties had the goodneſs to make for my beloved parent delighted me more than any thing elſe, and gave me a freedom of breathing, which I had not felt before from the moment I began to aſcend the ſtairs at St. James's.

The Ducheſs would have perſuaded me to dance, when we returned in the even-

ing; ſhe had, unknown to me, procured a ticket for the purpoſe. I make it a rule to obey her in every thing—but, on this occaſion, I was invincibly refractory.

Our whole party (the ladies having firſt gone home to drop their hoops) came afterwards to ſup with us. Tired and fatigued as we all were, it would have been difficult enough to have found amuſement for ourſelves—however, Mr. Lexington contrived to keep us all awake to this unconſcionable hour!

19th—(Before Breakfaſt.)

Lord Francis Lexington is the Duke's ſecond brother, indeed the only one that is now living. I can be no judge of his underſtanding—but I have heard it much called in queſtion by Mrs. Oxburn, who is a great wit herſelf, and takes him off, as ſhe

ſhe calls it, even at the Duke's table, without check or rebuke, either from his Grace or the Ducheſs, who are much delighted with her humour for ridicule, eſpecially as it ſpares nobody, and glances as often at her own mother, as at any one elſe.—I leave her for the preſent.

Lord Francis is certainly a very handſome middle-aged man, has a moſt engaging countenance, and inſinuating addreſs; his faults, if he has them, are concealed from me; I have not Mrs. Oxburn's penetration to develope them; I think him charming, and ſo thinks my dear Lady Jane Petworth,—ſhe deteſts Mrs. Oxburn, and ſo does your Mary.

Lady Francis brought her Lord an immenſe fortune, but I do not like her, ſhe is ſo fooliſhly fond of him, and has ſomething ſo fiddle-faddle in her motions, ſo drawling in her voice, that one never wiſhes to ſee her move or hear her ſpeak; —ſhe calls her Lord Francy, and it is Francy my dear, and Francy my love,

every time ſhe opens her lips.—Mrs. Oxburn ſat near enough to whiſper in my ear, her Ladyſhip is a little *in for it*;—I do not underſtand the meaning of her phraſe, and ſhall never aſk for the explanation of it.

Dreſſing Time.

The Ducheſs has kept me employed the whole of this morning, in filling up printed cards of invitation with names taken from the porter's books, which are almoſt as large as Sir Walter Raleigh's Hiſtory of the World; theſe cards are for a maſked ball, on the 28th of February; there are others, I find, already gone out, for an aſſembly on the 2d of the preſent month. —Her Grace put me in mind of Lord Auberry, and deſired I would ſend him cards for both her public nights;—I ſaid I did

did not know in what part of the town he lived,—that might be eaſily remedied, ſhe obſerved, for it was impoſſible a man of his conſequence could be concealed in a garret, or buried in a cellar; come, added ſhe, let them be written this moment, and I will give ſuch orders as ſhall find him out, if he is not taken alive into Heaven.

I believe there is no danger of that ſort, ſaid Mr. Lexington, who was good-naturedly aſſiſting me in my employment; I knew Auberry when I was in Italy, and if he has not been doing penance ſince that time, he will have no better pretenſions than I have to get there, without paying all the pains and all the penalties of mortality.

I could not help ſmiling, yet was never ſo confuſed and diſtreſſed in my life;—I dared not abſolutely refuſe to obey the Ducheſs;—it was impoſſible that I ſhould obey her, and I heſitated ſo long for an excuſe, that ſhe took the pen out of my hand and filled up the cards herſelf: There,

ſaid ſhe, giving them to a ſervant, with directions to find out Lord Auberry, there, Miſs Montague, the deed is done, and I am quite diſpleaſed with you for ſtarting ſo many difficulties to the great deſire I feel that the name of Lord Auberry ſhould be enrolled on my liſt of viſitors.

I thought I ſhould have cried from vexation, but, as ſhe ſaid, the deed was done, and I knew it could not be undone; what had I to do but hide my chagrin as well as I was able, with only one ſolitary hope to reſt on, which is, that Lord Auberry will have too much conſideration, at leaſt for himſelf, to accept an invitation that muſt reduce him to the neceſſity of meeting me?

Juſt going to Reſt!
I bluſh at the Hour, and ſhall paſs it over.

We ſat down to day ſixteen at table,—Lord and Lady Francis, Mr. Lexington and

and his two ſiſters, Lady Rachael Thomſon and her lively daughter Mrs. Oxburn, Lady Elizabeth Jones, Mrs. Tovee, Lord Selby, Lord Silveſter, Mr. Melvine, and Sir Aſhton Montague; the laſt of theſe gentlemen was named to me by the Duke of Cleveland as my relation, being deſcended from the ſame family; adding, in a low voice, this young man would have been heir to your father, had you remained in your own ſphere, and not come down to cut him out of the entail.—I did not know before there had been ſuch a claimant, and that I had innocently been the means of diſpoſſeſſing him; I cannot believe he likes me the better for it, for though he was very civil, and talked to me a great deal, there was a reſerve and melancholy about him, that did not teſtify much internal ſatisfaction. I was placed between Mr. Lexington and him;—what I thought exceedingly odd, was the number of unmeaning queſtions he aſked me about Lord Auberry;—I was very ſhort

in my replies, and anſwered him with ſo much indifference, that the converſation on that diſagreeable ſubject ſoon became languid, and without any force expired of itſelf.

To-morrow, dear grand-mamma, I ſhall make you acquainted with all thoſe of our party who have not yet had the honor of being preſented to you on paper;—they almoſt live with us; we are ſo entangled together that you will hardly be able to underſtand the life and adventures of your Mary, unleſs I name them to you; I muſt do more, I muſt be honeſt, and tell you not only my own opinion of them, but alſo ſuch parts of their private anecdotes as my guardian angel, Lady Jane Petworth, has unfolded to me, for the regulation of my conduct at preſent, and the eſtabliſhment of my happineſs in future.

For the firſt time I have been this night to the Opera, and afterwards to no leſs than three different aſſemblies, but was not much delighted with either;—I might have

have been charmed with the Opera, with the muſic, and dancing, if I could have heard the one or ſeen the other; but the voices of the ſpectators from every corner of the houſe, above and below, who, I obſerved, never once looked towards the ſtage, overpowered thoſe of the performers, and there were ſo many gentlemen, beſides our own party in the box, who ſtood up in the pit to pay their compliments to the Ducheſs, and remained talking to her the whole evening, that my ſight was as much impeded as my hearing.

With all the care I take to throw a veil over my ignorance, I am ſometimes ſo unfortunate as to draw aſide the curtain: for inſtance, till this night I had never ſeen or known the uſe of an Opera glaſs;—two faſhionable looking girls, from an oppoſite box, planted each of them one full at me; I turned round to a gentleman who had dined with us, and aſked him, in the ſimplicity of ſimpleneſs, what little weapons thoſe were which thoſe two ladies, pointing

them out to his notice, ſeemed to examine with ſo much attention;—he very politely tutored my folly, and inſtructed me as to the uſe for which they were intended;—it is a faſhion that will never be adopted by your Mary, though it is certainly a very general one, as the two I had firſt obſerved were no longer remarkable, for very ſoon there appeared almoſt as many of thoſe impertinent glaſſes as there were eyes to direct them from.

20th, Morning.—From my own Room.

I have had a moſt extraordinary dream!—I fancied myſelf in the ſame houſe, and in the ſame company where we concluded our laſt night's fatiguing round of pleaſure;—every body paid their court to me, every body flattered me, and I grew quite tired of

of hearing my own praiſes.—I was thinking how I could get away from them, when one of the two ladies, who looked at me through her Opera glaſs, came up cloſe to me, and ſmiling in my face, tried to ſtrike a dagger in my boſom!—I avoided the ſtroke by receiving the wound on my hand; and ſo ſtrong was this imaginary aſſaſſination impreſſed on my mind, that when I waked, which was in conſequence of the force with which the blow was aimed, I could ſcarce believe myſelf unhurt, but examined my hand, and fancied I felt it ſmart exceedingly. I have told Jenny my dream; ſhe ſays it ſignifies a falſe friend, and wiſhes we were once more ſafe at Riverſdale;—the phraſe of a falſe friend is a too common one, and nothing in my opinion can be more full of error; concealed enemies there undoubtedly are, but a falſe friend is impoſſible. However, as I do not look on Jenny or myſelf to be endowed with the gift of divination, I ſhall endeavour to account for my viſion rather by the rules of

conſiſtency

conſiſtency and plain reaſoning, than by any ſupernatural interference.

At one of thoſe aſſemblies to which the Ducheſs of Cleveland carried me, and which was the very laſt of the three on the liſt of our engagements for that evening, —the very firſt faces I recollected were thoſe of the two ladies whom I had ſo lately ſeen at the Opera-Houſe, and I had once more the ill fortune to become the object of their ſcrutiny;—I call it ill fortune, becauſe there is nothing in the world that I ſhrink from ſo much as certain looks, which, in all circles of faſhion, are given and returned by the ladies who have not been preſented to each other:— Theſe girls followed me from room to room, as long as we continued to partake of the very great amuſement of being ſtifled, except the comfort of abſolute ſuffocation. At night I always entertain my ſoſter-ſiſter with any thing ſtrange or wonderful that I have ſeen in the day; I told her of the ladies and the Opera glaſſes;

ſhe

ſhe ſaid, they muſt be very bold ladies indeed, and was glad, for my ſake, it was not a ſword or a gun, inſtead of a ſpy-glaſs, that they held up to frighten me. With the words ſword and gun ſounding in my ears I fell aſleep, and the terrifying dream I have repeated was certainly the conſequence.

Five o'Clock.

Forenoon in Town, Afternoon in the Country.

Mrs. Oxburn called to aſk if I would walk with her; the Ducheſs ſaid it would do my health good, but I thought of my dear Lady Jane's advice, and determined not to go.—Never, ſaid ſhe, ſtep beyond the bounds of common civility with that dangerous woman; reſtrain, in her preſence, as much as you can, the innocent

warmth of your heart; it is ſuch diſpoſi-tions as yours that cannot be too guarded againſt the arts of your own ſex, I mean ſuch of them who have need of ſupport to keep the very ſlippery path they are yet permitted to tread, in that ſociety from which it would be more prudent to baniſh them. Such is Mrs. Oxburn;—her edu-cation was early neglected; ſhe ran away from her parents, married a needy gentle-man, by much too good for her, and has ever ſince led a gay, diſſipated, and, I can aſſure you, a very diſſolute life; every body receives her, becauſe her huſband has not thought fit to abandon her. There is no mother who has ſons old enough to be taken in by the charms of her perſon, and the brilliancy of her wit—or daughters whoſe morals are worth preſerving, that, though they are afraid to ſtem the torrent of fa-ſhion, do not ſhudder at the contagion of libertiniſm, which ſhe is ſo able and will-ing to ſpread through every houſe, the doors of which are opened to let her in.

Lady

Lady Rachael Thomſon I ſhould have thought a mighty good ſort of woman, but that Lady Jane told me her daughter's education had been neglected.

I have ſaid I do not like Lady Francis Lexington, and I have hinted as much of her two nieces; they are ſo very affected, and ſo very haughty to every body except the Ducheſs of Cleveland, their brother, two uncles, and Lady Francis, that I never ſhall like them.

Lady Elizabeth Jones is ſo difficult to be pleaſed, that it is in vain to attempt it, at leaſt the Ducheſs tells me ſo, and from what I have obſerved, I muſt be of the ſame opinion;—ſhe will entirely manage, or ſhe will have nothing to do with you; ſhe will allow of no will but her own, and even when you ſubmit to be governed by it, ſhe will ſtill find out ſome method to contradict herſelf, for the pleaſure of diſſenting from you. Many are the battles between her Grace and this ſtrange old Lady, but I can ſee plain enough in whoſe favour

favour the conteſt would always end, if the latter had not a great deal of money to bequeath, and the former great hopes of ſucceeding to it; indeed ſhe has a right to expect it, being the neareſt relation, and, I believe, the only ſurviving one that Lady Elizabeth acknowledges.

Mrs. Tovee is the oddeſt creature I ever ſaw in my life; I hate to ſit by her at table, for ſo great is her eagerneſs to deaffen you with the diſcordant tones of her voice, that you are in danger of being deluged; I have felt the effects of it ſparkle on my face, and I am ſure my plate has not eſcaped the ſame dirty conſequence. She is not dictatorial, like Lady Elizabeth Jones; on the contrary, it appears, by her very accommodating manners, that there is nobody's opinion ſhe has ſo little reſpect for as her own.

Mr. Lexington you are already acquainted with; I am ſure you would like him, for he is invariably polite and good humoured; he has an eſtabliſhment worthy of

of his own deſervings and the Duke's munificence; he lives by himſelf, as his ſiſters do by themſelves;—is is a wonder to me that, ſo fond as they are of him, they have not learned to adopt his art of pleaſing.

Lord Selby takes ſome pains to perſuade me that I ought think him the moſt charming man in the world, but he does not find me a docile ſcholar; I can never begin to find out his merit, till he leaves off to admire himſelf.

Lord Silveſter has deſired to engage me for the two firſt dances at the next ball where we happen to meet;—and this, though I have paſſed many days in company with him, is all I can tell you of Lord Silveſter.

And now I think I have mentioned all that were of our party yeſterday, except Sir Aſhton Mantague and Sir James Melvern; I was almoſt afraid to look at or ſpeak to the former, leſt he might talk to me of Lord Auberry; and the latter always forces me to turn my head from him, as I have no particular

penchant

penchant for being ſtared out of counte_ nance;—and yet Sir James never means to offend. This habit of ſtaring is, I believe, a trick of abſence in him, and that he does not know what he is looking at.

Thanks, deareſt grand-mamma, for your dear letter*, and for the charming account you ſend me of your health and good ſpirits.

Half after Twelve.

The Ducheſs of Cleveland has been a little indiſpoſed, and we have not gone out, neither have we been alone; the ſame people again to-day as yeſterday, except Sir Aſhton Montague, who does not ſeem

* This letter is omitted.

to

to be on the ſame footing of intimacy here as the others are.

Her Grace's complaint was a violent head-ach, nevertheleſs ſhe has borne a good deal of talking, and four card tables, the whole evening.

Mrs. Tovee ſaid to her after dinner, in the moſt pathetic tone imaginable,— "My dear Ducheſs, well, to be ſure, I am grieved to ſee how much you ſuffer, and how little you have eat for your dinner; but then you are ſuch a pattern of meekneſs and patience, that we muſt all be the better for your trials."

What is it o'clock? ſaid Mr. Lexington, pulling out his watch, that his inclination to laugh might paſs unobſerved. The evident motive for a queſtion ſo *mal-apropos* ſet every body who heard him in a greater ſtate of agitation than himſelf, and whilſt he contrived to look as grave as a judge, a general titter prevailed round the table; the Ducheſs ſmiled, and Mrs. Tovee did not appear to be one of thoſe who were the leaſt

leaſt pleaſed with the mirth going on at her expence, but joined in it, unconſcious of being the founder of it.

Lady Elizabeth Jones called this morning, and inſiſted on my going to air with her; I made a thouſand excuſes, but might as well have let them alone, and I do not remember, in my whole life, to have ever paſſed two hours more diſagreeably. We dragged heavily along, through roads as deep as a well, and in a fog ſo thick, that the coachman ſtopped twice to find out his way, though her Ladyſhip ſaid, he muſt be the moſt ſtupid animal in the creation, for that he regularly carried her the ſame road every day, which I found was towards a village called Hampſtead, about ſeven or eight miles from town.—— The converſation within was not more enlivening than the objects without.

I ſometimes think that I feel more conſtraint when I am with the Ducheſs of Cleveland, than is neceſſary to my own comfort; but I find, ſince this morning's expedition,

expedition, that I am not one half ſo much afraid of her as I am of Lady Elizabeth Jones.

She began with aſking me how I liked London, and I ſaid I liked it exceedingly; —ſhe fixed her ſtaring blue eyes in my face.

I am ſurpriſed to hear ſo young a Lady as you, Miſs Montague, make ſuch a confeſſion.

I really only intended to anſwer your Ladyſhip's queſtion; and I hope there is nothing abſurd in confeſſing one's ſentiments, if they are not in themſelves reprehenſible.

Your arguments are not quite concluſive. Suppoſe, for inſtance, that I, who am very much your ſenior in years and experience, ſhould hold it reprehenſible that Miſs Montague, not yet nineteen, bred in the boſom of ſolitude, ſhould, in the courſe of a few days, imbibe ſuch a predilection for the vain pleaſures of a diſtracted world, as

to

to prefer them to the innocent ſcenes of a paſtoral life in the country.

Dear Madam, I have ſaid no ſuch thing.

But you gave me reaſon to ſuppoſe it.

Then I beg to undeceive your Ladyſhip, for be aſſured, I had rather paſs one day at Riverſdale, than a hundred in London.

That is very odd indeed; I ſhould have imagined, from what I have heard of your amiable diſpoſition, the very diſtinguiſhing marks of favour you receive from the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland, ſhould have prevented you, in my preſence at leaſt, from giving a preference ſo ſtrong and ſo decided.

This is only a ſpecimen of the manner in which we entertained each other in our funeral proceſſion; for though the ſubject was often changed, the mode of conducting it never varied.

Jan. 21.—Noon.

I had a new chair brought home laſt night, and the firſt uſe I have made of it this morning, was to carry me to Bruton-ſtreet; I found my dear Lady Jane in bed; ſhe came home ſo late in the evening, loaded with a heavy cold, that ſhe is nurſing herſelf, and does not mean to ſtir out of her houſe to-day, but promiſes to dine with us to-morrow.

I breakfaſted by her bed-ſide, with Miſs Beaulieu and Miſs Forteſcue, a very elegant girl, nearly of my own age, who, I find, is to ſupply the place of my new friend, whilſt ſhe is performing for me thoſe tender offices at Riverſdale, for which, if it was in my power to avoid it, I would allow of no repreſentative.

Lady Jane has deſired me to aſk the Ducheſs for leave to bring Miſs Forteſcue

with her to-morrow; I am going down to execute my commiſſion, and hope I ſhall find her in a good humour.

Four o'Clock.—From my Toilet.

I never deſire to be a great Lady, if, for the title even of a Queen, I am expected to barter the feelings of kindneſs, gratitude, and affection.

Her Grace's politics and mine do not agree;—we have been canvaſſing them over—we have had a grand battle—the day is my own;—but who am I to thank for it!—Never ſhould I have carried my point, if I had not been reinforced by Mr. Lexington.

I found her Grace ſitting before her toilet, the labours of which were nearly fi-

niſhed; ſhe told me her head-ach was quite gone, and if I waited five minutes, ſhe would go with me to the breakfaſt-room—then enquired how long I had been up, and what I had been doing?—I ſaid, nine was generally my hour—and that I had been as far as Bruton-ſtreet, to enquire how Lady Jane Petworth did, after her excurſion to Windſor:—The meſſage I brought from her was two or three or times at the very door of my lips, but as ſhe never aſked for her, or made any reply when I mentioned her, I ſent it back again till a more favourable moment ſhould preſent itſelf. She talked to her woman about her dreſs for the evening, and not another word paſſed between us till we ſat down to breakfaſt.

I prefer any ſituation to a *tête-à-tête* with ſome particular people, who are leſs diſpoſed to be pleaſed with the ſociety of one friend, than many flatterers.

Her Grace looked rather peeviſh, and began filling out the tea, and at the ſame

time addreſſed herſelf to me, but without lifting her eyes from the table.

I think, Miſs Montague, you ſaid ſomething about your having been in Bruton-ſtreet.

I went there this morning, to aſk after the health of Lady Jane, and to thank Miſs Beaulieu for her kind intentions of going down to Riverſdale.

Well, that was not much amiſs; but, my dear, you are ſo very fond, I obſerve, of making friendſhips with what you think good ſort, and what I call ſtrange ſort of people, that you will really become quite unfit for the very exalted ſtation the Duke and I have it in our minds to raiſe you to.

I am ſure your Grace does not mean to include Lady Jane, or her niece, in your definition of ſtrange people.

Then you miſtake me, for poor Lady Jane is quite a figure—and neither of them are like any body one knows.

I could have replied, It was too true, and that to my misfortune,—having never met with

with any of my own ſex like them in all the faſhionable circles where, in vain, I expected to find many, who were equally entitled to my reſpect and confidence, though none could have the ſame claims as they had on my gratitude and affection. —I did not dare to ſay this, I only ventured to think it—and the lecture continued, without any interruption on my part.—Lady Jane knows ſhe is no favourite, and has given me a thouſand charges never to offend the Ducheſs by defending her.

I ſhall not tell you, Miſs Montague, the eſtabliſhment we intend for you,—that will be ſoon enough for you to know when you are of age; in the mean time, it is the Duke's requeſt, and my own, that you will not encourage danglers, or form any ſilly connection that will put it out of our power to be of uſe to you.

I felt hurt and mortified at the inſinuation of my encouraging danglers; my face was covered with bluſhes, and my eyes filled with tears; but I contented myſelf with

ſaying, I ſhould at no period, however near or diſtant, form any connection, or accept any propoſals, but ſuch as were fully ſanctioned by Lady Auberry.

Well, my dear, you are really more reaſonable than moſt young folks, who know ſo little of the world, and we ſhall have pleaſure in ſettling you beyond her moſt ſanguine expectations.

Dear grand-mamma, who can be meant by this very great man, intended for the huſband of your Mary? I ſhould imagine he can be nothing under the Great Mogul; and by the time I have paſſed three more winters in the circles to which I have lately been initiated, his Highneſs comes to fetch me. I think I ſhall have no objection to return and reign with him over his infidel ſubjects, rather than continue, as I now am, the ſlave of diſſipation.

You are a great favourite with the Duke, Miſs Montague—he thinks you the moſt amiable and accompliſhed young perſon about town; and if I could prevail on you

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to leave off ſome old cuſtoms, and adopt ſome new ones, I ſhould be very much of his opinion.

How ſubtle is the voice of flattery! Who can hear it, and remain diſſatisfied? All my little angry emotions ſubſided;—I aſked for her inſtructions, and would have followed them if they had been, as her Grace would have me believe, ſo very much to my advantage.

To ſet this advice down in her own harangue would take up more minutes than I have to beſtow on one ſubject; but the ſubſtance of it may be compriſed in a few words:—I was too much held under controul by the falſe maxims of old-faſhioned prejudices; too much on my guard with people whom every body knew; and too ready to give myſelf up to thoſe whom nobody cared for;—ſhe had ſometimes thought me cold, even to unpoliteneſs, to Mrs. Oxburn, who was, without any competitor, a woman of the moſt brilliant and extenſive knowledge of the world, and the moſt capable

capable to faſhion a young perſon after her own manner, if ſhe would not liſten to ſuch ſtarch pieces of formality as Lady Jane Petworth, who, ſhe was ſure, had filled up my head with a parcel of nonſenſe.

Before her Grace had quite finiſhed, or I had an opportunity to reply, which I found myſelf inclined to do with more ſeverity than perhaps would have accorded with her expectations or my own benefit, Mr. Lexington was announced, and I muſt confeſs I regarded him like an angel of peace, ſent down from Heaven to my relief. *Entre nous*—It appears to me that he is the only perſon in the world of whom the Ducheſs is really fond, or of whom ſhe is afraid.

All now was harmony and good humour; her Grace forgot to ſchool me, and I forgot to be refractory.

When I ventured to make my grand motion, he had the goodneſs to ſupport it, or I never ſhould have prevailed.

She

She had no idea of having girls intruded on her at thoſe hours dedicated to her family and particular circle of friends;—that her public nights was another affair, and then Miſs Forteſcue, or Miſs any body elſe, might come if they choſe; they would ſerve to fill up the rooms, and not incommode her.

We have put off five engagements for this evening; the Ducheſs fears the pain in her head may return, ſo we only go to the Opera, and have company, as uſual, to ſupper.

I have diſpatched a note to dear Lady Jane, but not a word of our difficulty to obtain admiſſion for Miſs Forteſcue; I only ſay, that to-morrow the Ducheſs expects them. Mr Lexington would carry it himſelf;—was it not exceedingly good-natured?—but perhaps he is impatient to ſee Miſs Forteſcue, as I have ſaid a great deal to him of her beauty and elegance.

I wonder if the ladies have cards for Lady Elderton's ball; I forgot to aſk them this

this morning; we did not get our's till late laſt night, and it is for next Tueſday, the day after our own aſſembly;—the very ſhort notice is accounted for in a note from Lady Elderton, ſent with the invitations. Her apology is, that her ſon, who has only been two days returned from the Continent, deſires her to give him this extraordinary proof of her indulgence, and hopes her Grace, whilſt ſhe has a right to condemn her compliance with the too volatile wiſhes of a young man, will forgive a want of *etiquette*, which is the unavoidable conſequence of a mother's weakneſs. —There is ſomething in this note that pleaſes me, and makes me wiſh to ſee the writer of it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.